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REMINISCENCES OF DeWOLF HOPPER

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DeWolf Hopper To-day

A STAR BOOK

REMINISCENCES OF DEWOLF HOPPER

Once a Clown Always a Clown

WRITTEN IN COLLABORATION WITH
WESLEY WINANS STOUT

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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By De Wolf Hopper

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I

MYSELF WHEN YOUNG

Most of us fall into our life jobs by chance. We do not become department-store buyers, state policemen, railway mail clerks or candy makers because of any driving urge to these particular vocations, but because the paths of least resistance drifted us that way. We have — worse luck — to make a living, and this or that was the best or the first that offered.

The actor and the actress do not, with rare exceptions, drift on to the stage. They make a dead set for it. Nor do they think of it in terms of meal tickets. They cross the footlights out of an egotistic desire to strut before an admiring world. They hope romantically to win a fortune along with their pictures in the papers, but always they have been willing to starve cheerfully if accompanied by adequate publicity.

I do not sneer at this vanity; rather do I share it. Applause is sweet and most of the

world gets little enough of it. It is more than sweet; it is an insidious habit-forming drug. Given a regular supply, the addict's eyes shine with an unnatural glitter; denied it, his cheeks cave in. Politicians also know these ecstasies and torments. It is not a pretty sight to see a broken actor or an ex-mayor frantically shaking the empty vial of incense.

Even the other arts offer no such reward as the stage. The lawyer may sway a jury as few actors can an audience, but bailiffs are at hand to stop a demonstration. The minister may only surmise the effect of his pulpit oratory; it is not decorous to cheer in church. The soldier wastes twenty years in sagebrush barracks waiting for his war. The writer must work indefinitely to win a public, and then his laurels are apt to be too much like a kiss by telephone. The painter and the sculptor commonly leave their rewards to be collected by their heirs. But the response to the actor is immediate, direct, ungrudging, complete. Small wonder that the stage never lacks for apprentices.

I was born to the stage, although, paradoxically, both my father and my mother came from stock that never set foot in a theater and thought it the vestibuled limited to Hades.

My father's father, Isaac Tatum Hopper, was a Philadelphia Quaker, a rabid Abolitionist and conductor of the Philadelphia station of the Underground Railroad. Because of his participation in the Civil War the Friends churched him.

My father was so incensed at this action that he withdrew from the sect. My mother was a D'Wolf of Rhode Island. The D'Wolfs were High-Church Episcopalians, but they did not share that Church's usual tolerance of the stage.

Until their marriage my parents had never seen a play, but now they went almost constantly. They became passionately fond of the theater, the more so because of the interdiction of their youth.

My grandfather once said accusingly to my father, "John, I hear thee has been to see that player woman," meaning Laura Kean. "Is that true, John?"

"Yes, father, ninety-four times," my father responded.

For eleven years no child was born to my father and mother; then I, William D'Wolf Hopper, came, the only child. Doctors and biologists now put prenatal influence down as a superstition, I understand. It may be, but I

find no other adequate explanation for my predestination for the stage.

I was born just off the Bowery, on Third Street, then a street of quiet folk, but within a year we moved to Forty-third Street, between Sixth Avenue and Broadway, then a brand-new block of brownstone fronts. When I was six my father died. He left an estate sufficient for my mother's comfort and to provide me at twenty-one with a legacy, which the stage took away from me.

Twice, long after his death, evidence of the general love borne my father came to me dramatically, incidents all the more affecting in that I have only the vaguest memories of him myself. A banquet given to Nat Goodwin, myself and other Lambs in London in 1899 was honored by the presence of Ambassador Choate. Mr. Choate's remarks were given over very largely to affectionate remembrance of my father and mother. He told, in passing, of my third birthday, and of how every visitor to the house greeted me with "Hello, little Willie, so you are three years old."

And I answered, "No, I ain't; I won't be three till Choke comes."

Nat Goodwin, who spoke later, commented

in passing, "I remove my hat to any actor who can hire the Ambassador from the United States to the Court of St. James to three-sheet him."

Another time I attended a farewell dinner in San Francisco given by the Bohemian Club to Joseph Redding, a brilliant California lawyer and a rarely fine amateur musician. Redding told me privately that he was moving to New York to run away from his musical reputation.

"Every lawyer in California admits that I am a great musician, and the musicians agree that I am a first-class lawyer," he said. "In New York I hope to be a lawyer among lawyers."

As a guest I was called upon, and that call — you have guessed it — was for "Casey at the Bat." As I stood up, one hand on the piano, about to launch forth, a voice from the rear interrupted. A stranger to me asked my pardon for the intrusion, but pleaded that he was a trans-bay commuter who must leave shortly to catch the last train for the night. The gentleman spoke of his early association with Joseph H. Choate.

"A good many years ago," he went on, "Choate said to me one day, 'Bill, I want you to meet the most charming young couple I

know.' I assented and dined with a Mr. and Mrs. John Hopper. The only blot on that very pleasant evening was the appearance of a puling infant who had to be kissed good night. I did so under compulsion; but, gentlemen, I would not kiss him to-night for all the gold ever mined in California. He stands before you," pointing to me.

The interrupter, it developed, was former Governor William T. Barnes.

Another old friend of my father has told me of an incident that would indicate that I come naturally by some of my frivolity. Sydney Howard Gay, the journalist, was a boon companion of my father.

Riding home from his office at Number 110 Broadway with Gay on a horse-drawn omnibus of the time, my father found the bus crowded to suffocation, as New York's public transportation vehicles always have been. The two of them plotted a hoax designed to empty the bus and provide them with seats. My father became a maniac, suddenly violent; Gay, his keeper. They played their rôles with such spirit that the bus was emptied of its passengers instanter — with one exception.

This exception, a frugal person who, having

From the photo. by Sarony Pub. Co. Collection of Albert Davis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

EDNA WALLACE AND DEWOLF HOPPER IN "PANJANDRUM"

From the photo. by Falk. Collection of Albert Davis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

HOPPER AND MARSHALL P. WILDER IN THEIR OWN VERSION OF THE BALCONY SCENE FROM "ROMEO AND JULIET"

paid his fare, had no intention of abandoning it, shrank terrifiedly into a far corner, but stuck it out. Taking this as a reflection upon their acting, Gay and my father clinched and rolled down into the straw which, in winter, always covered the floor of the busses as protection for the cold feet of the passengers. The remaining spectator climbed hurriedly upon his seat, held his umbrella before him as a shield and shrilled to Gay, "Kill the brute, kill him!" But he valued his ten cents more than his life and never passed the door.

The only child of an idolizing mother and widow, I grew up a spoiled brat. I repaid my mother's idolatry with idolatry; but as her love demanded no sacrifice whatever, I became a selfish young pup intent exclusively on making the world my oyster. I was Willie in my childhood, and in later years I have been Will or Wolfie to my friends. DeWolf, my stage name, was born of the vanity of youth. I despised the Quaker plainness of Hopper, and William had a plebeian sound to my fastidious ears, but I thought D'Wolf, my middle name, *distingué*. In later years I have regretted that affectation, but it no doubt was, unconsciously, a shrewd move. The actor, like soap and hair nets, finds

a distinctive trade name useful. The public remembers an unusual name more easily, so long as it is pronounceable. The D'Wolf became DeWolf through a proneness on the part of the public to pronounce it "Dwolf."

I achieved stardom and made my first great success in "Wang." My name being only moderately familiar, nine ticket buyers in ten asked not for seats for Hopper, but for seats for "Wang." When my manager and I chose a bill to succeed "Wang", we purposely called the play by the meaningless syllables, "Panjandrum." Rather than stumble over "Panjandrum", the public asked for seats for Hopper, as we intended that they should. Showmen learned the fundamentals of advertising long before the business world.

My father and mother had intended me for the law. Joseph Choate, one of the greatest lawyers of the past generation, was my godfather and in due time I was to start reading law in his offices. But as my godfather observed me he became increasingly skeptical of my forensic future.

As I was emerging from adolescence, he said to my mother, "I don't think Willie will be a pronounced success at the desk, Rosalie. I fear

he lacks concentration. I do not associate him with briefs, somehow, but his voice, his physique, his presence should make him a rare pleader."

That voice, physique and presence already were posturing in amateur theatricals. My first amateur performance must date back at least as far as my tenth year. My mother had taken me to Boston, where we were visiting the Frederick Whitwells. Either young Fred, aged eleven, or his sister Natalie, aged eight, had a birthday during my stay, and as part of the occasion Natalie had written a play unbeknown to her elders, which we children presented as a surprise. The guns of the Civil War were scarcely cool, and the play opened with the outbreak of hostilities.

Four little husbands bade an affecting goodby to four little wives in Act One, and were off to the wars. Three years elapsed between the two acts, during which time the characters aged alarmingly. The curtain of Act Two disclosed four little wives, old and gray, thanks to charcoal wrinkles and much flour on the hair. They sat knitting by the fireside when the four little husbands limped home from the wars, one by one. This one had lost a leg at Shiloh, that one an arm at Antietam, a third was much the worse

for Libby Prison, and the fourth was sightless. Each had performed incredible deeds of heroism and was rather immodest about it.

When the fourth little husband had recited his Iliad and his Odyssey, the four little wives arose and in a singsong declaimed, "We, too, have not been idle."

They left the stage momentarily to return each with her favorite doll in her arms. I have seen and played in many dramas, but none with a more effective curtain. Their elders were convulsed and the players accepted this enjoyment as a spontaneous tribute to their art.

As a boy of fifteen I appeared in Ralph Roister Doister, earliest of all known English comedies, at a Sunday-school entertainment at Octavius Brooks Frothingham's Unitarian Church, and before that I had been giving, on the slightest provocation, my Senator Dillworthy monologue, in which I, with the aid of a silk hat and a Lawyer Marks umbrella, burlesqued the spread-eagle school of oratory.

When I graduated at twenty to the professional stage, I reversed the usual matriculation of the actor by beginning well up the ladder and skidding downward. In an amateur performance, for charity, of "Conscience" at the

Fourteenth Street Theater, I played an old man. Jacob Gosche, then manager of Theodore Thomas' orchestra, was present and professed to be struck by my performance. Cynics have intimated that the fact that I had money might have influenced Mr. Gosche's enthusiasm. I hope not. Gosche introduced himself and suggested that I turn professional. Only a small sum of money lay between me and this consummation, he indicated. Not yet of age, the money my father had left me was not yet mine to command, but with an indulgent mother that was no obstacle. She advanced the funds needed to finance the Criterion Comedy Company, with Gosche as manager and F. F. Mackay as director. We went on the road with a repertoire of three bills; "Our Boys", a reigning London success; "Caste"; and "Freaks", the latter an adaptation of Hausemann's "Tochters."

I was lost to the law, but "Choke" displayed an admirable stoicism.

Although Gosche had seen me as an old man in the amateur show, I was cast as a youth, an eccentric comedy rôle, in "Our Boys." In "Caste" I played variously, a swanky English officer, the juvenile lead and a light-comedy

plumber; and in "Freaks" I did a bombastic charlatan. The type system, whereby an actor or actress is condemned for life to play only the sort of character which he or she has first done conspicuously well, was not yet in vogue. Versatility was the first demand of the theater; without it one was not an actor.

A few of the heroic rôles, such as "Othello" and "Hamlet", were thought a bit beyond the range of the ordinary actor, but with such exceptions every player in his or her time ran the gamut from blank verse to low comedy.

As Blanche Bates was told at the outset of her career by her mother, "An actress should be able to play Topsy or Lady Macbeth equally well. It is not how she looks, but what she makes the audience think and feel." They were, as a result, better actors, man for man and woman for woman, than the products of to-day's specialization. Or such is my opinion.

My money lasted me four years. The second year of the Criterion Company I attained twenty-one and got my hands upon all of it. The faster we lost money, the more lavish Gosche and I grew. In the third year we scuttled the Criterion Company and organized the Gosche-Hopper Company with Georgie Drew

Barrymore, mother of Ethel and Lionel and Jack, as leading woman at the then very large salary of one hundred and twenty-five dollars a week. As a vehicle we chose the Mormon thriller, "One Hundred Wives", written for us by two Chicago newspapermen, Colonel Pierce of the *Inter-Ocean* and J. B. Runnion of the *Tribune*. Two seasons of "One Hundred Wives", despite the support of Georgie Drew Barrymore and a generally excellent cast, disposed of what was left of my heritage and I returned to Broadway to look for a job on my merits — in the theater, of course.

In these four years we played the road as far south as New Orleans, west to Kansas City and north to Montreal, week stands in the larger towns, one-night jumps in between. This was routine in the theater from the time when the railroads first pushed West to the Missouri River until labor and transportation costs and the movies virtually destroyed the legitimate stage in all save a handful of the greater cities. Hundreds of actors of the first rank did not play New York at all, or for no longer than a week or two in a season. The road was the theater and the theater the road until about 1910. Plays customarily were financed and cast in

New York and launched there, because the boast that a play had come from a run at such and such a theater on Broadway was worth money at the box offices in the hinterlands. The Broadway engagement frequently was played to a loss, but what of it? Six months' losses in New York could be retrieved usually in three months on the road. Last year, according to *Billboard's* annual compilation, three out of four new dramas produced on Broadway failed. More than half did not survive six weeks. And there was no road to anoint and heal their Broadway wounds.

A twelve weeks' run on Broadway once was phenomenal, but whatever the run, the production went on tour as a matter of course. Now a play may run a year on the Great White Way without finding any one willing to gamble on it as a road venture.

The play of to-day is designed for Broadway and must make its money there or not at all; certainly not one in fifteen New York productions is seen any more on the road other than in stock or repertory shows, and that one, barring such occasional prodigies as "Lightnin'", will confine itself largely to cities of one hundred fifty thousand or more. Cincinnati and Kan-

sas City see fewer good plays now than Zanesville, Ohio, and Springfield, Missouri, did twenty years since. Booth, at his zenith, played such towns as Bowling Green, Kentucky, and Saginaw, Michigan.

I was about to say that one-night stands were history except for repertory shows, Tom shows, medicine shows, and the like, which play under canvas and still wheedle a living out of the towns of five hundred to ten thousand, when I happened to glance at the route list in the *Billboard*. There, in the second week of July, 1925, I found Miss Blanche Bates in "Mrs. Partridge Presents", a moderate Broadway success of last season, listed as playing Pueblo and Grand Junction, Colorado, Price and Logan, Utah, and Pocatello and Idaho Falls, Idaho, all within seven days. Here are one-night stands as actors knew them before Hollywood.

Pueblo may continue to see infrequent number-two and number-three road companies in new plays, but it is a safe hazard that Price, Logan, Grand Junction, Pocatello and Idaho Falls have not watched another Broadway cast headed by a star in a recent success in at least ten years. Many larger towns between Maine

and Oregon have not been so favored in more years than that, their opera houses abandoned, torn down, burned or given over to films, occasional minstrels and political rallies.

In one week in middle August, again, I found that splendid all-star revival company of "The Rivals", headed by Mrs. Fiske, playing Everett, Tacoma, Yakima, Walla Walla and Spokane, Washington, and Missoula and Helena, Montana. I'll wager that there were young men and women of voting and marrying age in the Yakima, Walla Walla, Missoula and Helena audiences who never had seen a stage play before. A teacher of elocution and dramatic coach in a town of twenty-two thousand in the Middle West canvassed the graduating class last spring and learned that only ten of its members had seen a play other than amateur in their lives.

Perhaps the country is hungry again for the sound of the human voice in its drama. I hope so, but until there is more evidence of it, Miss Bates and the all-star revival of Sheridan's old comedy will have to be classed as missionary enterprises.

To play in Pueblo on Thursday; Grand Junction, thirteen hours distant across the summit of the Rockies, on Friday; Price, Utah,

six hours farther across the desert, on Saturday; followed by Logan, Pocatello and Idaho Falls, can be no festive pleasure excursion, even in 1925. Hardship, discomfort and misadventure are inescapable in trouping. Forty years ago they were vastly more so. Hotels were bad as a rule, train service infrequent and unreliable, theaters individually owned and operated and each stand a law unto itself; companies were usually wildcat enterprises compounded of hope and enthusiasm, the business unorganized and the player with no protection beyond the good faith of the manager. Thanks to Equity, the actor or actress left stranded or unpaid to-day has only himself to blame.

Then we accepted conditions as a matter of course, expected them when we set out, muddled through them with as much ingenuity as we could muster and forgot them with the week or the season.

In those four years on the road in the late seventies and early eighties, we encountered enough slings and arrows to keep an actor of this generation in anecdotes for an idle winter at the Lambs Club, but only one left a lasting memory with me.

Christmas fell upon a Saturday in the first

season of "One Hundred Wives" and found us in Mississippi. Out of some experience with Chambers of Commerce and local pride, I refrain from naming the city even after forty-five years. The real celebration would come on Sunday, but preparation had begun early. I do not care to say that there was no sober citizen in the town on Saturday, but I speak advisedly when I say that he was not visible. The baggage-wagon driver and the entire stage and house crew were missing. Fortunately we carried our own stage carpenter. He and the rest of us trucked our trunks and enough of the scenery to set the stage from the station, set it up, took it down, hauled it back to the station, loaded it into the baggage car, lighted the kerosene footlights, manned the box office, the curtain rope, the props and ushered.

Matinées in the South in those days were played at noon. At twelve o'clock when not a five-cent piece had been offered at the box office, we hastily printed a sign on a strip of canvas to the effect that the performance had been postponed until one P.M., found a darky still able to walk, gave him a dinner bell and sent him through the business streets, carrying the banner and ringing the bell.

At one o'clock there still was not a soul in the house nor a nickel in the treasury. Not even the complimentaries distributed by the advance man had been offered at the door. We reversed the canvas, painting the joyful tidings that the matinée of this sensational drama, fresh from one hundred frenzied nights at Booth's Theater, New York, would positively be given at two o'clock, come one, come all, and sent our sandwich man forth with his bell to weave and ring again. At two o'clock not even the traditional boy and a dog — and the matinée was called off.

At the night performance fifty-three dollars was taken in at the box office, every cent of it drunk and demonstrative. The theater was an old-fashioned opera house, the first floor of the house on the second floor of the building. A flight of broad wooden steps led up from the street to the box office and the lobby. The house was still standing when I was there three years ago.

During the first act a belated citizen stumbled up the long flight of steps, slapped a quarter down at the window and demanded the best seat in the house.

The volunteer who was substituting at the

window said, "Excuse me, sir, but downstairs seats are seventy-five cents. Our twenty-five-cent seats are in the gallery."

The customer announced belligerently that he did not intend to pay more than two bits, and that he expected the best that money could buy.

He said it so pointedly that the treasurer *pro tem* came out of the box office declaring, "You'll go down those stairs for nothing, you big bum!" and was as good as his word.

The repulsed lover of the theater bounced down forty-two steps, picked himself up and left. But he returned. He returned with at least a tenfold two-bits investment in firecrackers, with which Dixie always has celebrated Christmas. Bunch by bunch he lit his crackers and hurled them up the steps into the lobby, where they exploded like a sham battle. Inside, the fifty-three-dollar audience took the recurring fusillades to be part of the show and applauded madly.

It was not a troupe of barnstormers that played to these indignities, but a company that included Mrs. Barrymore and Ada Gilman, two of the first actresses of their time, and John Ince, father of Tom and Ralph Ince. Will

Harris, father of Averill Harris, who is playing in "When You Smile" at the Walnut, Philadelphia, as I write, took one curtain by himself. A dagger in one hand and a revolver in the other, he kissed each to the audience, and escaped.

The Mobile and Ohio train, which was to carry the company to Mobile, where we would catch the L. & N. for New Orleans, had been held two hours for us.

I was walking on the station platform while the conductor was getting his orders from the dispatcher, when two citizens lurched up and demanded thickly of me, "Say, young feller, are you part of this here show that played town this evenin'?" I coyly admitted the soft impeachment and prepared to dodge around a freight car.

"Well, we jes' wan' t' tell you tha's bes' damned show ever did see," they hiccuped. That, if not praise from Sir Hubert, was as gratifying at the moment.

My partner, Jacob Gosche, had remained in Mobile, and I had planned to wait up until he should join us there. From the first time I saw a railroad train I had yearned some day to ride on a locomotive. I had persuaded this Mobile and Ohio engineer to let me ride on the steps of the cab, already was ensconced there

and the train about to start, when Harris came in search of me to complete the poker game which was to occupy the men of the troupe until we reached Mobile. I protested that I could play poker any time, while this was my first opportunity to ride on an engine. Harris was so insistent that I was needed to complete the game that I gave in and took a hand.

Harris thereby saved my life. An hour and a half later, near State Line station on the Mississippi-Alabama border, our train collided head-on with a freight train in a cut.

The engineer of the passenger was killed, the fireman so burned and mangled that he lost a leg, and all three men in the freight locomotive killed. The freight-engine crew were drunk on Christmas cheer, it developed, and ran by a signal at State Line, where we were to pass.

Other than cuts and bruises, the passengers escaped, but the most of them huddled together in shock and bewilderment. The one doctor who chanced to be on the train did his utmost, the rest was left largely to us actors, but a troupe that had just finished with a Christmas Eve performance such as that was alert for any emergency. I remember Georgie Drew Barrymore laying her new and costly fur-lined circular under

the head of the dying fireman of the freight. She sent that fur piece to the cleaners three times later. It would return apparently spotless, but always a day's dust and sun would bring back telltale stains, until she discarded it.

We carried the body of the dead freight engineer into our sleeper and laid it in a berth. The mangled and scalded fireman was laid across two seats in the smoker. I had used up the vaseline in my make-up box rubbing it into the man's burns, and returned to the sleeper to borrow more. It was the first time I had been in the immediate presence of death, and returning, I tiptoed past the berth where the dead engineer lay. Just as I passed, the corpse seized me by the left wrist and pulled me down. My heart stopped and I sank, numb with shock, to the berth edge.

The engineer was not yet dead. He had recovered consciousness, coldly sober and self-accusing. He held me there by a vise-like grip and cursed himself as I never had heard a man revile himself, and never wish to again. He consigned himself to the farthest reaches of hell, and was dead in five minutes. There was not an external wound on his body, but the autopsy disclosed scarcely a whole bone.

The negro feeder of the freight train was crushed under his engine almost against the fire box. He was singing hymns, delirious with pain. Harris begged the doctor to give the man something to end his hopeless suffering. The physician passed over a vial of chloroform.

"Don't give him all of it or you will kill him," he warned.

Harris turned his back and emptied the vial into a glass of whisky and I, holding my hat in front of my face to shield it from the blistering heat, held the glass out for the darky's groping hand. He downed it all, and died an easier death.

The tender of the freight engine remained on the rails. Its top was about level with the top of the cut. Fore and aft, the cut was blocked with wreckage, and it was a problem to get the recovered bodies away from the burning débris. The first car of the freight held lumber. Some of us wrenched three planks from the wrecked car and laid them from the top of the tender to the bank of the cut, a span of ten feet or so. When Harris essayed a gingerly trial trip the planks sagged ominously; so two volunteers stood beneath the center of the span and held the planks in the hollow of

their arms. One of these volunteers was a man in his eighties. With an unnatural strength, born of the excitement of the moment, the octogenarian bore up his side more surely than did his companion, a man half his age, as Harris and I stumbled across the bending planks with the body, but once we were across, the old man collapsed in a heap.

I am one of two survivors of that company, I believe. The other is Miss Vivia Ogden, who played the child part. She made a name for herself later as a character woman, notably in "Way Down East" and "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch", and she is one of David Wark Griffith's stand-bys for character bits in his pictures to-day.

That was early on Christmas morning of 1880. Mississippi was only four years out of carpetbaggery and Rutherford B. Hayes was President. Jack Barrymore was a babe of six months. I was twenty-two. At twenty-two the sixties are of an incredible antiquity, and were infinitely more so in 1880, when strong men retired to the chimney corner in their early fifties. The frontiers of old age have been so extended in my life that I never have caught up with that receding boundary.

The following summer, my wife, Helen Gardner, and I were waiting in the Erie station at Binghamton, New York, for a two A.M. train. It was a dingy station, the waiting room lighted by one flickering oil lamp. All engineers look alike in their working clothes, I have observed. An engineer opened the door, passed mistily through the gloom, removed the lamp from its bracket and lit his pipe at the flame. To my drowsy eyes he was the image of that Mobile and Ohio freight engineer, and the illusion brought back the scene so vividly that I had to put the pipe aside and go out into the air to shake myself together.

Ten or twelve years later, I dined one evening with Richard Mansfield in his private car in the railroad yards at New Orleans. There were no interlocking switches then and a railroad yard swarmed with bobbing lanterns carried by switchmen. I stopped one such, hobbling along on one leg and a wooden stump, and asked if he could direct me to the Mansfield car.

"Yes, Mr. Hopper," he said and showed the way.

"Do I know you?" I asked.

"Well, I had both of these when you saw

me last," he answered, pointing to his legs. It was the fireman of the Mobile and Ohio passenger train, a son of the dead engineer.

I was back on Broadway at twenty-three, my patrimony gone. There still was ample time for a glorious career at law, which should have by this time, let us hope, made me Mr. Justice Hopper. My friends and relatives pointed out the follies of my ways, even mapped them with the care of a topographical engineer. Had I been in a mood to listen, which I was not, of course, my empty pockets would have spoken forcefully enough without any supporting arguments. A young man may have some doubts of his fitness for running a restaurant, for example, after four losing years and bankruptcy, but no succession of disasters in the theater has yet given one actor or actress pause for thought. And if one is to lose a fortune, there is no better age than twenty-three.

So the next season found me in the Harrigan and Hart Company at their theater at Eighth and Broadway, playing the young hero in "The Blackbird." This engagement had no significance in itself, but it marked the forking of the roads for me. Annie Louise Cary, then one of the finest contralto voices in America, was

having tea with my mother one afternoon early in my Harrigan and Hart weeks.

"Annie, I want you to hear Will sing," my fond mother proposed, and Annie Louise listened with that polite attention an artist gives to the precocities of a friend's children, while I sang "The Palms" in French. I never had sung a note on the stage, I could not even read music, but I did unquestionably have the makings of a voice. Miss Cary was pleasantly surprised and flattering.

"That is a fine natural voice," she exclaimed. "By all means it must be cultivated."

Immediately I enrolled under Luigi Meola of the New York College of Music, and when the Harrigan and Hart engagement ended I gave my undivided time for eight months to my voice. Three months after I began, Meola's pupils gave a concert at Steinway Hall. I sang Schumann's "Two Grenadiers"; Miss Cary came, held her hands high above her head and clapped them noisily.

For practice in reading music by sight, I joined Samuel Warren's choral union. Warren was organist at Grace Church, then the parish of the Reverend Doctor, later Bishop, Potter. And at Grace Church I shortly became

basso in the volunteer quartet which sang opposite the paid quartet.

I have two stock stories, one of how William Lloyd Garrison, the great antislavery leader, blacked my boots, and the other of how Bishop Potter put me out of Grace Church. There is a bronze statue of Garrison on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston across from the Hotel Vendome. When I am in Boston I like to steer some friend by the statue, pause idly to glance at it, read the inscription aloud, and say casually, "Ah, yes. William Lloyd Garrison. He once blacked my boots."

As Garrison has been dead nearly fifty years, and as few men ever have been farther removed from shoe shining, my boast could hardly be more absurd; yet it is true. In my childhood my mother and I were guests at the Garrison home, and the gallant old idealist, who had been a close friend of my grandfather, took me for a walk before breakfast one morning.

We wandered about the ruins of an old mill, and I came away with my shoes white with mortar dust. Before we entered the house Mr. Garrison carefully dusted those shoes for me.

In much the same sense is it true that Bishop Potter once put me out of his church. At the

morning service he had announced that a returned missionary to the Indians would occupy the pulpit that evening, and bespoke the presence and the generosity of his congregation for the worthy man. The church was full that night and the platform crowded with clerical dignitaries magnificent in their sacerdotal robes. On each side at the rear of the pulpit of Grace Church there is a niche containing an elaborately carved and fashioned sacerdotal chair, high-backed and roofed. The chair opposite the position of the volunteer choir was occupied this evening by a pastor emeritus, who caressed a beard, the peer of those surpassing whiskers which trade-marked St. Jacob's oil, a sovereign household remedy of the hirsute eighties.

Next to me sat a stout and giggly contralto. I whispered to the contralto that the reverend gentleman surely must be Saint Jacob himself, and added George Ade's comment that a club-foot is a deformity, a harelip a misfortune, but that a beard is a man's own fault. At this moment it is in order for the hairsplitters to arise and confute me with documentary evidence that Ade was a boy in high school in 1882 and wrote nothing about whiskers prior to 1897. What of it?

Whatever the vintage of the joke, the contralto was convulsed and in no state of mind to resist what followed. The missionary was more eloquent in Choctaw, I trust, than he was in English. He was tedious and statistical and he mumbled his words. Saint Jacob cupped a hand to his near ear and strained, but after a time he gave it up. He fidgeted in his chair, then fell asleep, which he could do the more readily in that he was hidden from the sight of the congregation. In a sleepy stirring he raised his right foot in a way that brought his knee against a support of the chair roof. The support gave way and the roof fell with an appalling racket to the tessellated marble floor. Had all the Indians detailed by the missionary attacked the church in a body, their war whoops would have been the cheep of a muted violin by comparison.

Saint Jacob awoke with a start, and as a realization of the truth came to him, he looked at Doctor Potter with a schoolboy's please-mister-I-didn't-do-it expression.

The fat contralto and I exploded. If I managed to regain control of myself, her muffled squeaks would set me off again.

Doctor Potter tiptoed across the platform and

whispered, "Willie, I think you had better retire to the rectory."

"Please, Doctor Potter, may I go too?" the contralto pleaded hysterically.

"You may, and I wish I might go with you," the future bishop of New York replied.

I found no one anxious to engage my singing voice the following season and fell back on the legitimate. Fred Williams, father of Fritz Williams, who has been playing the doctor in "Rain" for these past three years, was stage manager at the Madison Square. Williams was the author of "The Blackbird" in which I had played with Harrigan and Hart, and through him I found a place as Pittacus Green in "Hazel Kirke" with the road company of the Madison Square.

Hazel was, I believe, the first of the wronged heroines, the Our Nells, of our drama, a theme that later was done to death and to burlesque. A simple Scotch lass wooed and won by a plausible Englishman and cast out by her stern father, she discovered too late that she had been married under the Scottish rite on English soil — but not altogether too late, for eventually they lived happily ever afterward. Probably "Hazel Kirke" has not been played in America for at

least twenty years, but few plays have had more performances on our stage; "Uncle Tom's Cabin", of course, and "East Lynne" and "Charley's Aunt", perhaps. It played continuously from 1881 to 1885.

The "Hazel Kirke" tour carried us into the Rocky Mountains to Leadville, two miles high on the flank of the Great Divide, then the lustiest boom camp that ever buried its dead with their boots on. Leadville drowses to-day in the high Rockies, dreaming of its fierce youth, but in 1883 it was only four years old, the most spectacular mining camp in the world and producing a fifth of the silver and a third of the country's lead.

Easy come, easy go was the town's shibboleth, and the coming and the going was a startling spectacle to a New York youth in his early twenties. The greatest of the camp's gambling houses was the Brick Exchange, operated by a man from Brooklyn still in his thirties. The lower floor was a public gambling house, the upper a private one under the guise of a club of three hundred and sixty members, the badge of membership being a key to the premises. Harry Davenport and I wandered pop-eyed into the lower floor and were given the privileges

of the club above. The first words I heard as we topped the steps were "And a thousand more", spoken by a player in a seven-handed poker game, and the goose flesh rose on my skin like a relief map of the Colorado mountains.

Champagne, the finest of Havana cigars and the best food in Leadville were served like the free lunch of New York bars. Having tried all, Davenport and I felt under certain obligations. We agreed to pool twenty-five dollars on a roulette wheel and were buying checks, when the proprietor ordered the croupier to return our money.

"Take it out in looking, boys," he told us, "and keep your money in your pockets. The odds are against you."

Our manhood thus impugned, we objected that we paid as we went.

"Give us a song then," the Brooklyn man suggested. "The boys would enjoy it."

Harry could play the piano after a fashion, but his repertoire was severely limited. When we came to canvass it we found only one song that he could play and I could sing, and it was not a tune that the environment suggested.

"We're sorry," we reported back, "but the

only thing both of us know is 'Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep'."

"Fine and dandy," the gambler applauded. "There's nothing I like better than a good hymn."

Davenport displaced the professor at the piano and to his accompaniment I sang that bass sailor's dirge. It was, now that I think of it, my professional début as a singer, and a singularly gratifying one, too, after a fashion. Certainly I never since have sung any song to quite such a response. Something more than ten thousand feet above sea level and one thousand miles away, the citizens of Leadville appealed to me as reasonably safe from watery graves, and, so I assumed, apt to be correspondingly indifferent to a sailor's woes. Any of them were likely enough to be carried off suddenly by Colonel Colt or timber-line pneumonia, but there was not enough water within many rifle shots to drown a litter of kittens. And though the song is not exactly hilarious, I never had thought of it as likely to wring a tear from any one less susceptible than the immediate family of a lost mariner.

The roulette wheels were stilled, the faro banks closed, the poker players laid down their

hands and the bartenders folded theirs. We were given the most decorous silence and as I got well into the song, red-shirted miners began to wipe their eyes furtively and white-shirted gamblers to blink mistily. The vigorous applause at the close was heightened by the apologetic blowing of noses in red bandannas here and there. Such a response left me dumfounded and vaguely ill at ease.

The next morning Charles Wheatly, who took his morning's hike as Leadville did its eye opener, took me on a long walk out among the mines, which, in that rarefied air, had my tongue hanging out. We stopped at an outlying saloon and ordered two bottles of beer at fifty cents a bottle.

The bartender looked me over closely and asked, "Are you the fellow that sang that rocked-in-the-cradle song up at the Exchange last night?"

I defiantly declared that I was, wherewith he pushed the dollar back across the bar.

"Your money's counterfeit here, partner," he told me. "You treated us last night, now we treat."

Nor were Davenport and I permitted to spend a cent in Leadville while we stayed.

Wherever we went our fame had preceded us and what the house offered was ours. I learned then, what I have observed often since, that the most sentimentally responsive of audiences, the one most surely and easily reached by any suggestion of God or home or mother, is the audience that has no God, no home, and hasn't given a thought to mother in a year.

I was in good company with "Hazel Kirke." Among the cast were Mrs. E. L. Davenport, Annie Russell, Ada Gilman, Mrs. Cecile Rush, C. W. Couldock, Charles Wheatly, J. G. Grahame and young Harry Davenport. The son of Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Davenport — he one of of the finest tragedians, and she one of the first actresses of our stage — and a brother of the great Fanny Davenport, my accompanist in "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep" is an actor and a gentleman worthy of his antecedents, but in 1883 he was an insufferably fresh youth of about eighteen. One of his most objectionable habits was that of helping himself to a cigar from any pocket but his own, and lighting it airily without so much as a by-your-leave.

Somewhere in the South I bought a loaded cigar, then a prime American practical joke and a favorite with the village cut-up. Removing

my coat to my arm, I strolled up and down the platform of the railroad station, elaborately exploiting that cigar cuddled all by itself in a vest pocket. Harry lifted the cigar the moment he saw it, put it in his mouth, but did not light it. When the train came the men of the company found seats in the smoker. Harry sat down beside a countryman and struck up a conversation at once, as he did at all times with the strangest stranger. The boy being something of an amateur gardener, he soon found a common ground of interest with the farmer.

At length Harry was reminded of the cigar. He borrowed a match from his seat mate and lighted up. On the sixth puff the cigar exploded like a Roman candle, directly into the farmer's whiskers, which began to resemble an illuminated Christmas tree.

The farmer leaped to the conclusion that Harry was a Smart-Aleck city fellow bent on making sport of a countryman, and our huge relish of the joke confirmed him in that suspicion. The most direct way of recovering his lost dignity that suggested itself was hammering the daylights out of young Davenport, and it took all of us to drag him off the boy.

Harry was not the sort to be cured in one lesson. For perhaps a week he bought his own cigars, but he soon returned to our vest pockets. We tried burying the teeth of rubber combs in our perfectos, but he only tossed the doctored smoke aside and reached for another.

In a Savannah hotel I encountered George K. Foster, a friend of my boyhood. Foster was traveling in the South for his firm, Foster Brothers and Fairchild, manufacturing chemists. He heard our grumblings about Davenport and suggested asafetida.

"It's probably the vilest-smelling stuff in the pharmacopœia," he explained, "a fetid gum resin, and a little of it will go a long way."

We rehearsed the plant as carefully as a new play. Foster provided a pellet of asafetida, and I enlisted the man at the hotel cigar counter as an accomplice. With a penknife we removed a conical section from the blunt end of a cigar, inserted the pellet and replaced the cone of tobacco. I then arranged the doctored cigar in next to last place in a box containing just six cigars.

Foster and the men of the company all dined together in the hotel.

As we got up from the table I said, "Gentle-

men, I have found an excellent cigar at the stand in the lobby; will you join me?"

We sauntered toward the stand. "Let's have that cigar you sold me yesterday," I asked the dealer. He brought the box from the case, as arranged, and I passed it to Couldock, as the eldest, then to Wheatly, Foster, Grahame in that order, and finally, before taking the last one myself, to Harry. I took the added precaution of holding my thumb upon the last cigar.

All except Harry lighted up immediately and lounged in a row of lobby chairs. Davenport, by some caprice, put his cigar in a vest pocket, but sat down alongside. Under the influence of this contretemps, our conversation was a bit forced for a time, but Harry was oblivious of that. He was delighted to sing solo at any time.

The hour grew late, our cigars grew short and Harry's still remained in his pocket. When the clock behind the desk pointed to 7:45 we were forced to start for the theater. We walked, Harry with us and still without the consolation of tobacco.

The theater originally had been a church, and a great stained-glass window extended the full height of the back wall of the stage, doing

service for both floors of the dressing rooms that had been built back of the stage. Incidentally, the window was deeply inset, leaving a sort of shaft between the first and second floor dressing rooms. Grahame and I had the room directly over one occupied by Mrs. Davenport, Mrs. Rush and Miss Gilman.

When Harry had made up, he called upon his mother, as was his unvarying custom before each performance.

We heard him enter and greet his mother, and a moment later our ears were startled by his voice asking, "Do you ladies object if I smoke?"

The ladies, in their hapless innocence, did not object. The cigar was lit, Grahame and I held our breaths. Suddenly a chair was overturned below us, three women screamed, and the skirmish line of the world's most stupendous stench came up through the shaft. The concentrated essence of all the reeks in the aggregate that ever assailed my olfactory sense did not even suggest the plague that rolled up that shaft. It drove myself and all of us out of the dressing rooms and out of the theater, and it was fifteen minutes before we dared to return. The curtain was that much late.

Harry played his part with a deathly pallor on his face, but as the curtain fell on the first act he mustered a sickly grin and said with a vestige of his old sureness:

"I thought I smelled a rat!"

II

LABELED COMIC

You would smile, I take it, at the thought of DeWolf Hopper as Lear or Hamlet or the hunchback Richard. Yet I was much more obviously equipped by nature for the heroic than for buffoonery, and it was by chance that I have sported the motley of the clown rather than worn the dark cloak of tragedy on the American stage these more than forty years.

The actor and the actress, I have said earlier, do not, like the most of mankind, drift into their life jobs by accident or inanition. They are obsessed by the stage and seek it out as June bugs do a street light. But once behind the footlights, their careers are subject to the same caprices of chance that dog the steps of Tom and Dick and Harriet.

There never was a clown, it is said, who did not yearn to make his audience weep or tremble. Miss Fannie Brice, for instance, who is one of the funniest women on our stage, is a positive genius

of the comic. Does she glory in that distinction? She does not. She is very seriously determined, on the contrary, to make herself a dramatic actress and has enlisted, I understand, no less a person than David Belasco in the enterprise. And I know it to be true by something more than common report and the case of Miss Brice, for I have nurtured such an ambition, and of all the rôles I have played in the theater, my favorite is that of Jack Point in Gilbert and Sullivan's "Yeomen of the Guard", — a strolling jester who dies of a broken heart. I revel in that little touch of pathos.

Had I seen myself as Hamlet or Brutus in my freshman days I might not have this secret sorrow now, but I saw myself only as an actor; what genre of actor mattered little then. I had the first two physical essentials of the classics, stature and voice; not singing voice, but speaking voice, that deep-chested volume and resonance of speech demanded by the heroic rôles of blank verse. My stature is not so uncommon, but such chest tones are, and suggest the classics at once. Something more than six feet, a bass rumble and proper enunciation are essential to tragedy, of course, but I know of no reason why I could not have acquired the other

ingredients. And my early experience in the theater was in the drama.

But when I returned from four years on the road, in which I had lost the money left me by my father, and Annie Louise Cary heard me singing "The Palms" in my mother's home and advised my mother that I had a fine natural voice which should be cultivated, I was turned toward the singing stage.

I did not find work for my newly educated singing voice at once. After a season on the road in "Hazel Kirke" with a Madison Square Theater traveling company, I was given the part of Owen Hathaway in "May Blossom" with the resident troupe in a summer run at the Madison Square. My mother never missed a performance, nor did she ever fail to start and direct the applause by rapping vigorously on the floor with her umbrella.

As the summer was hot and business was none too good, this moral support was appreciated by the company; so much so that they presented her with a handsome gold-headed umbrella at the close of the last performance, Daniel Frohman, manager of the company, making the presentation speech.

In "May Blossom" one of the male char-

acters was required to sing a few bars of a popular song offstage. The actor cast for the rôle was no singer, and the bit was given to me. Georgia Cayvan, the leading woman, who had become very fond of my mother, and sympathetic with her boundless ambition for me, asked Colonel John A. McCaull to drop into the theater sometime and hear me sing. McCaull, who had been one of Morgan's guerrillas that harried the Indiana and Ohio shores during the Civil War, then was the great man of comic opera.

He came and heard and offered me a place as first barytone in one of his half dozen companies. I accepted, naturally, but I never sang first barytone for McCaull. Had I done so the probabilities are that I either still would be an obscure barytone at seventy-five or one hundred dollars a week, or that I would have strayed into grand opera. I had studied the operatic rôles of St. Bris in "Les Huguenots", Sparefucile in "Rigoletto", Baldasori in "La Favorita", the basso rôle in "La Juive" and Mephisto in "Faust." My mother was ready and anxious to finance two years' study abroad, which she envisioned as a prelude to stardom at the Metropolitan Opera House.

But through unexpected and enforced changes in two of McCaull's companies, Mark Smith, Junior, a recognized first barytone, was shifted to the company I was joining. Having me on his hands, McCaull, with many misgivings, tried me out in the comedy rôle of Pomeret in "Désirée", John Philip Sousa's first opera.

We opened at the Broad Street Theater, Philadelphia, one of the few theaters of my youth still standing and housing first-class productions, and I was an unexpected and considerable success.

I never have been able to live down that success. At the outset I was hugely gratified with it, as one is likely to be with first victories, and when I had tired of it, it was too late. I was catalogued in the card index of the theater and of theatergoers as a singing comedian and a singing comedian I have remained. There are worse destinies.

Once many years ago Augustus Thomas was stricken with a great idea. He asked me to go with him to call upon Charles Frohman, without taking me into confidence as to his mission. When we were in Frohman's office, Thomas, to my abashed surprise, began something like this:

"Charley, here is your chance to do a big

thing for the theater. Hopper's talents are being thrown away in comedy. He has the frame and the voice for tragedy. Heroics demand the heroic, but who have we among our tragedians that fills the bill? Look at Thomas W. Keene and E. H. Sothern! Splendid actors, I grant you, but neither with the robust voice or the stature. Here is Will, a man intended by Nature for the heroic, and the stage is using him as a clown. You are the manager to rectify this blunder, to give our stage a tragedian who looks the part."

And more in that vein. Frohman listened tolerantly to Thomas' enthusiasm and when the latter had run down, said:

"What you say is substantially true, no doubt, Gus, with the important exception that it can't be done. Will has all the physical attributes of tragedy and he is a first-rate actor, but his public expects him to be funny and would resent his being anything else. They have labeled him as comic and comic he must be."

Frohman, of course, was right. In the theater and out, the public likes to catalogue all the ingredients of life; insists upon doing so. That is good, this is bad; this is right, that is wrong; this is funny, that is sad; this is wise, that is

foolish; this to be desired, that to be avoided; all deep blacks or spotless whites and all neatly ticketed and indexed. It is a thought-saving process and few of us like to think. It is so much easier to look into the back of the book and find the answers all worked out for us.

So it is the audiences more than the managers who are at fault for the type system which has grown to be such an evil in the legitimate theater, sentencing this man to play an irascible old man all his life because he once did such a part very well; that woman to a lifetime of slangy chorus girls because she first attracted notice in such a rôle. Hundreds of actors and actresses are confined to-day in such strait-jackets, the most of them competent to play well any part within the limitations of their sex and age.

When Al Jolson, for instance, blacked his face and fixed himself in the public mind as a surpassing minstrel, he forever limited his usefulness. In each of his shows Mr. Jolson is careful to appear once during the performance in white-face, but it is too late. Conceive of the public bewilderment and disgust if he should announce a season of dramatic repertoire. Yet, in my opinion, Mr. Jolson is an actor of infinite possibilities.

So only once in my life have I had the gratification of playing the heroic. At the Lambs' Gambol in 1909 I played Mark Antony in the funeral-oration scene from "Julius Cæsar", seriously intended and seriously performed.

The Lambs in their annual Gambols seek a fare not to be had in the theater at large. From the Lambs' point of view it would have been pointless to have heard Robert Mantell, Louis James, Frederick B. Warde or William Farnum, all actors associated with the rôle, deliver Antony's oration. Such actors were put in the mob and the major rôles given to men identified with the frivolous in the theater. In the mob of fifty-three that listened to my guarded eulogy of the murdered Cæsar were sixteen actors who had played Antony themselves.

As Shakespeare wrote it, Antony enters in advance of Cæsar's body, but even before an audience largely composed of fellow professionals I was fearful of the effect my reputation as a comedian might have upon their risibilities, and I insisted upon entering behind the bearers carrying the body.

"They won't laugh at a corpse at any rate," I grimly told Gus Thomas.

This was the last performance of mine that my mother witnessed. She was very feeble and died the following January. My son helped her into the Metropolitan Opera House by a side entrance and sat with her this night. All my stage career she had been torn between two ambitions, one to see me one of the great of the dramatic stage, the other as one of that glittering company of the elect at the Metropolitan Opera House. This night she saw me on the stage of that house in one of the great rôles of Shakespeare and she saw me successful. Much of my success was born of the surprise of the house that I could do it at all, but a success I was, gratifyingly so, before as stage-wise an audience as an actor may play to.

We went directly from the theater to the train, and as I would not see my mother again for some days, I rushed around to say good night to her as soon as I was quit of the stage. She could only put her arms around me and sob. A son, if only for a moment, had lived up to his mother's expectations.

The Lambs then had not yet ceased to take their annual Gambols on tour, and so I played Antony in eleven other cities, my last appearance in the classical drama. Twice, previously,

I had played in special performances of a classic, once as Falstaff, the other time as David in "The Rivals", but as the former brought me under the tutelage of William H. Crane and Mrs. John Drew, and the latter of Joseph Jefferson, I should prefer to leave these stories to another time.

Mr. Thomas was mistaken or carried away by his argument when he told Charles Frohman that my stature and voice were thrown away in comedy. Nothing is thrown away in comedy: there is nothing but what is useful, and my height and sounding voice have greatly extended the range of my clowning by providing that sublime-to-the-ridiculous contrast that is the very juice of most comic situations. I do not intend to imply that a comedian of five-feet-two with the voice of a penny whistle is thereby prevented from being as funny as I am. A great comedian may achieve his results with very few tools in his kit. Take any comedy situation to pieces to see what makes it tick, and you will discover that its mainspring lies in the art of the comedian. The comic value of the equipment is secondary, the physical equipment of the actor last. That is why the jokes that were so excruciating in the theater

last evening so often prove to have soured on you overnight when you open them at the office the next day.

For five years I worked for Colonel McCaull without a rest. We played fifty-two weeks a season, twenty-two in New York City and thirty on the road. In ten years, in fact, I had just two weeks vacation. Opera bouffe, light opera, operetta or comic opera, as you will, was in its hey-day. Musical comedy and the revue were yet unborn. In numbers and importance light opera ranked second only to the drama itself. Musically the United States had produced little of its own beyond Stephen Foster's negro songs, and we imported virtually all of our light operas from Austria, Germany and France, with the notable exception — Gilbert and Sullivan, who had just burst upon a delighted world. One McCaull company headed by Digby Bell was singing Gilbert and Sullivan and paying the authors' royalties; half a dozen other troupes were pirating the same.

The European flavor of light opera was, no doubt, one of its weaknesses in America and an explanation of why it had been all but driven from our stage by musical comedy fifteen years later. The former was purely romantic and

far removed from American life. Musical comedy was of our own soil, its wit was native, its book topical, its music generally livelier, if cheaper, and it bore down heavily upon the comedy.

But musical comedy never ceased to be a technical monstrosity, a bearded lady. In opera in any form the music helps the story; the story suggests the music. It is the artful blending of the two. In musical comedy the story and the score often were as friendly and mutually helpful as the North and South of Ireland. Either they ignored each other, or the story was kept leaping madly from the cane fields of Louisiana to Greenland's icy mountains, to India's coral strands, and back to a Montana ranch by way of the Bowery, to keep up with the changing costumes of the chorus. The peasants and soldiers, having rollicked a Heidelberg drinking song, gave way for a moment to the low comedy of the Cincinnati brewer and the English silly ass in love with the heroine, and were back as cotton pickers cakewalking to the strains of Georgia Camp Meeting, the story arriving badly out of breath in its dash from Mitteleuropa. The song cues frequently were the funniest things in the show. To the last, musical comedy

From the photo. by Falk. Collection of Albert Davis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

DIGBY BELL AND MR. HOPPER AS YOUNG MEN

From the photo. by Hall, N. Y. Collection of Albert Davis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

MARGUERITE CLARK AND DEWOLF HOPPER IN "THE PIED PIPER"

maintained the polite fiction that the songs had something to do with the book, and cued each musical number. In order to do this it was necessary now and then for the tenor to be reminded by a catchúp bottle in a Vienna rathskeller of Apple Blossom Time in Delaware. Or the story at the moment having been left stranded on the island of Sulu and the authors having a song about Doctor Cook, gumdrops and Eskimos on their hands, the dialogue would run something like this:

She: Isn't it warm here in Sulu?

He: It is indeed. I wish I were back again in dear old Franz Josef Land.

The conductor, who had been waiting with poised baton, would give it a flourish and the pack would be off in full cry on the gumdrop song.

When the padded-shouldered young Harvard football hero and Policeman O'Rourke's daughter, Kathleen, the heroine, popped up in Sherwood Forest from Bar Harbor, I always used to enjoy seeing Kathleen register surprise at finding a grand piano in the heart of the forest.

"Who could have left this piano here?" she would exclaim.

"How fortunate!" would be Padded-Shoul-

ders' line. "Now you can play again for me that song you sang that night we first met under the elms of old Cambridge. You remember, When It's Stogy Time in Wheeling, West Vee Ay."

I exaggerate, but not so much as you may think. The musical-comedy success of last season was "No, No, Nanette." It contained one song number, "Tea for Two", that had traveled around the earth within sixty days after the show opened in Chicago. If you should happen to see "No, No, Nanette", observe how the song arrives as abruptly as a man falling through a skylight. Nanette and Tom are quarreling. They have not been to tea, they are not going to tea, they are in no mood for tea, but suddenly amidst their reproaches they burst into song about the delights of a tender, intimate tea. And having sung it and been encored until they are breathless, they return to their quarrel. I single this out only because the show still is a current success and the melody is familiar to all the world.

I have seen musical comedy fade away into the revue, glorified vaudeville where all pretense of plot has been scrapped and nakedness substituted for the story, and now I am seeing the return of light opera. I doubt that the

Shuberts ever have made as much money on any two other productions in their history as they did recently with "Blossom Time", an operetta fashioned around the life and music of Franz Schubert. Arthur Hammerstein's "Rose-Marie", another light opera, has run a year on Broadway now to capacity houses, and "The Student Prince", in one company of which I am playing, has been enormously profitable.

Light opera may or may not be back to stay. It will be the public's loss if it is not, but I walk warily in the paths of prophecy. I have a prediction, however, which I am prepared to shout from any housetop. That is that Gilbert and Sullivan will never die. They are to the English-speaking musical stage what Shakespeare is to the drama. The analogy is not strained.

Although I love these operas best and made my entry on to the singing stage when they were in their first furore, I never heard or sang in a Gilbert and Sullivan production until 1911, nearly thirty years later. I had been playing almost continuously for those three decades. Actors frequently are accused of having little or no interest in any play with which they have not been identified. The true explanation often

lies in the fact that the actor has almost no opportunity of seeing other plays.

The Shuberts had revived "The Mikado" in 1910 with such success that they were about to try "Pinafore" for a short summer run when I returned to New York from a 25,000-mile tour in "The Matinee Idol." They offered me the rôle of Dick Deadeye, but I was worn out and looking forward to a summer's rest. The salary offered and the promise that the run would be for four weeks only led me to accept. Instead "Pinafore" ran most of the summer and all of the next season. Deadeye is the least interesting to play of all the Gilbert and Sullivan comedy rôles, but since then I have sung in all their operas save three, "The Gondoliers", "Princess Ida" and "The Grand Duke."

Gilbert and Sullivan are immortal because each was a genius with an infinite appreciation of the other. W. S. Gilbert was the greatest comic poet of the language. Arthur Sullivan was an accomplished composer in any company — in his particular field, without compare — and together they rose to heights that neither could have attained singly. Here is the perfect union of sense and sound. Sullivan's music matches wit for wit, whimsey for whimsey and

gibe for gibe with Gilbert's book and lyrics. Not a note but what is in harmony with the spirit of the words, not a lyric or a phrase but what tells the story. There is no padding, no stuffing, no irrelevancies.

Much of Gilbert's swordplay was directed at follies of the day and institutions peculiarly British. The lapse of time and the subtlety of his shafts have removed the sting and left some of his most famous lyrics merely delightful nonsense to the bulk of present-day audiences. Such auditors, hearing a Gilbert and Sullivan opera for the first time, too, will recognize endless catch phrases and popular allusions, the original source of which they have not suspected — such as the Lord Chancellor's "Said I to Myself, Said I" song in "Iolanthe." The man who grumbled that Shakespeare's plays were nothing but a lot of quotations might have brought a similar charge against "The Mikado", "Pinafore" and others.

There are not so many laughs in the best of plays that the cast is apt to overlook them in rehearsal, yet we continually find new ones in Gilbert. I discovered one only last season in "Pinafore" that I had wasted for many seasons. So is it a rare sight to see a performer laughing

to himself over his own lines. Gilbert has done that to all of us.

I should have liked to know W. S. Gilbert, but I should not have cared to know him too well perhaps. All of his wit is not to be found in the operas. His friends, his neighbors and actors were victims of some of his sharpest shafts. There is the story of the rehearsal of "Pinafore" at which he directed Rutland Barrington, who played the captain, to sit pensively upon the skylight of the good ship. The actor sat down and the skylight collapsed beneath him.

"Pensively, Rutland, pensively — not expensively," the author chided.

It was Gilbert who when asked by Lady Tree how he had liked Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's first venture in "Hamlet," replied, "It was funny without being vulgar, I thought." But my favorite Gilbertian anecdote is that of his rejoinder to the baronet, a partner in a house famous throughout the empire for its relishes, pickles, jams, jellies and preserves, who was a neighbor of Gilbert's in the country. The baronet had grown very touchy about the source of his wealth and his title, and was rather a hoity-toity neighbor.

Gilbert's dogs killed a pheasant or two on his acres and the latter wrote a curt note of protest to the author. Gilbert wrote back politely:

Dear Sir Alfred: I am extremely sorry about the loss of your pheasants, and I am taking steps to prevent my dogs from trespassing on your preserves in the future.

Sincerely,
W. S. Gilbert.

P. S. You will pardon my use of the word "preserves", won't you?

Some one once challenged Gilbert to make up a verse offhand riming the words "Timbuctoo" and "cassowary." He studied for a moment and recited:

"If I were a cassowary in Timbuctoo,
I'd eat a missionary and his hymn book too."

In my second season with McCaull, I sang in "Clover." Charles W. Dungan, a second barytone of note, was under contract with McCaull at no small salary. McCaull had no spot where he could use Dungan that summer and suggested that the actor take a vacation. Dungan, it developed, was not in a vacation mood, and McCaull was confronted with

the necessity of paying him for a summer of leisure. Rather than do that, the colonel did what many another manager has been known to do — he cast the actor in an insignificant rôle in "Clover" in the hope that Dungan would refuse the part as beneath his dignity and his reputation.

Dungan was such a conscientious actor that I never have been able to decide whether he accepted the part out of a sense of obligation or whether he sensed McCaull's strategy and was determined to confound it, but take it he did. He appeared in one act only and had exactly one line:

"My Lord, the King is dead!"

yet he made up for it as carefully as if he were playing Hamlet.

The rest of us got a good deal of malicious sport out of the situation and made it as difficult for Dungan as possible. We tried every trick known to actors in an effort to break him up in the delivery of his one line. I used to tap my wooden shoes on the stage at his entrance in imitation of a galloping horse. But when he did trip at last the catastrophe was purely accidental.

The moral of "Clover" was the vanity of undue ambition. The hero leaving home on a quixotic quest wins at length a victory at a heroic cost. That victory is made futile by the unexpected death of the king. At Dungan's entrance with the grievous tidings, the entire company would fall to their knees, the quartet at the front of the stage, and sing a very lovely prayer, closing the act. The solo parts were sung by Eugene Oudin, who played the hero.

At Wallack's Theater one summer evening toward the close of the run, Dungan tripped on the scabbard of his sword as he entered and fell flat center stage with the words, "My Lord ——"

I never have known another such utter collapse to overtake a company. We had heckled him for weeks to no result, and now, when we had given up, he had fallen over his own sword. With one exception none of us, principals or chorus, could utter a note. Marion Manola, the prima donna, became so hysterical that she fainted. The orchestra was silent; the conductor, Adolph Nowak, had laid down his baton and buried his head on the stand. All by himself Oudin lifted his voice and sang that prayer unaided. He sang not only his solo part

but the concerted bits as well, and he never sang better or with more feeling in his life. The audience, convulsed by Dungan's mishap at first, was listening breathlessly to Oudin before he finished. When the curtain dropped, the rest of us rolled on the stage helpless in our mirth.

Oudin and I shared a dressing room. He had married Louise Parker, a prima donna, the previous year and they had a three months' old child whom they adored madly.

"How in the name of heaven did you do it?" I asked him when we were in the dressing room and I was able to speak again.

"I did it," he explained without a smile, "by picturing Louise and me in the first carriage following a white-plumed hearse carrying little Louise to her grave."

The child's death was purely supposititious. She was perfectly well then and she is living in England to-day.

When I first joined McCaull I noticed a painting of a magnificent horse on his office wall and commented upon it. The colonel was much affected. The horse was a stallion, a noble animal of Kentucky breeding and much endeared to him. In a bad season he had been

forced to sell him in order that he might pay the chorus salaries, and he had lost all trace of the animal.

Some three years later Morris, McCaull's negro body servant, now servant to Francis Wilson, burst into the office of the Broad Street Theater, Philadelphia, with the news that he had found the stallion.

The colonel jumped into a runabout pulled by two fine bays which were hitched in front of the theater, and asked me to go along. Morris sat on the floor of the rig, his feet hanging out, and we drove out North Broad Street to a German grocery. McCaull described the horse to the grocer, who admitted that the animal was in his stables.

"But he is mad, mad," the grocer protested. "A wicked brute. He nearly murdered my boy and me. For days now no one goes near him. It makes no matter if he was your horse, if you go near him he would kill you."

McCaull stepped to a side door of the grocery and called once. The stallion thrust his head out of the stable door and whinnied excitedly. His former owner walked to the stable door unhesitatingly and the horse laid his head on the colonel's shoulder and whimpered. If a horse

can sob that horse did. McCaull led him away and two weeks later, curried and clipped, his coat shining, his head high and his tail a plume, that stallion proudly stepped through Fairmount Park, McCaull and I riding behind him. When we were well into the park the colonel tossed the reins on to the animal's back and drove him the rest of the way by the sound of his voice and the gentlest touch of a whip.

I left McCaull in 1890 to star for the first time in "Castles in the Air" by Gus Kerker, who later wrote "The Belle of New York", a pioneer among musical comedies. Locke and Davis, who were managing the enterprise, also owned the Emma Juch Grand Opera Company, and although we played to good business, all our profits went to keeping the Juch company going. Lacking a reserve fund, one losing week in Cincinnati broke our company. Della Fox, then an unknown from St. Louis, was soubrette in the troupe. I saw an opportunity to take over the company for one dollar and assumption of the liabilities, and told the members of the company that if they would refuse to open in Chicago until they were paid for the Cincinnati engagement I would manage. This was largely bravado on my part. I lacked the money to

get the company to Chicago, neither did I know where I could get it with any certainty. Della Fox overheard a whispered conversation between B. D. Stevens, my personal manager, and me. That evening I found a note in my box at the hotel. It contained eight hundred dollars, her savings of the season, and a note that read:

"Please accept this and don't make a fuss about it."

We did accept it, the only occasion on which I ever borrowed money from a woman, and signed a receipt for it. The receipt came back torn in fragments and with a note that said:

"Friends do not do business on this basis."

We returned the $800 to her in Chicago and finished out the season with a profit.

The next season Miss Fox was my leading woman in "Wang", the first great success of either of us. "Wang", which was rather burletta than light opera, was a great entertainment of its kind. I played it two seasons, should have played it four, revived it three times in later years, and it has been played repeatedly by others. J. Cheever Goodwin and Woolson Morse wrote the piece. With characteristic irresponsibility, Goodwin sold all his interest for fifty dollars a week, and made only a bare

living from it. Had he possessed a rudder, Goodwin might have become the American Gilbert. Gilbert himself never excelled Goodwin's "The Man with an Elephant on His Hands" song in "Wang", but lacking that rudder Goodwin is forgotten.

"Panjandrum", purposely so named to force the public to accustom itself to asking for seats for Hopper rather than seats for the play, followed "Wang", and when Della Fox graduated to stardom in 1896, Edna Wallace became my leading woman in "El Capitan" by John Philip Sousa and Charles Klein, and later my wife, — the same lady who now is playing vaudeville very successfully billed as The Sixty-Two-Year-Old Flapper. I saw her in Philadelphia when we both chanced to be playing that city last summer and she looked as young and charming as the night we opened in "El Capitan" at the Tremont Theater, Boston, May 13, 1896.

Both authors had protested against such an ominous opening date, and each declined to come near the theater when after much argument we overruled their objections. But they were both of them in the house the second night, when the opera's success was assured. It ran for two seasons.

I did not, it will be noted, share their distrust of the thirteenth, specifically May thirteenth.

It had been an earlier May thirteenth when I first recited "Casey at the Bat."

III

CASEY AT THE BAT

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed
his hands with dirt;
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped
them on his shirt.

On May 13, 1888, I recited a poem at Wallack's Theater, Thirtieth Street and Broadway, New York City. No bronze memorial tablet marks the site, yet the day may come. Lesser events have been so commemorated. The poem was "Casey at the Bat."

I thought at the time that I was merely repeating a poem, a fatherless waif clipped from a San Francisco newspaper. As it turned out I was launching a career, a career of declaiming those verses up and down this favored land the balance of my life. When my name is called upon the resurrection morn I shall, very probably, unless some friend is there to pull the sleeve of my ascension robe, arise, clear my throat and begin:

"The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day."

For thirty-seven years I have been doing it. The actual number of times is a problem for one of those laid-end-to-end statisticians. Where or what I may be playing, I must, before the evening is out, come before the curtain and pitch to Casey. If there is a benefit my contribution, it is understood, is Casey; a banquet, no other eloquence than Casey is expected of me. Long ago the repetition became so mechanical that I found it difficult to keep my mind on the task. In the midst of it I would find myself still declaiming, but my mind far from the theater or studying some face in the house. I have discovered that I can force my attention from straying only by recalling the hundred variations of emphasis with which I have experimented from time to time.

Casey has so dogged my steps, indeed, that it has been suggested that I change the final stanza to:

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is
shining bright;
The band is playing somewhere and somewhere
hearts are light;

And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;
But whatever else is happening, Hopper'll be striking Casey out.

There doubtless are greater poems in American literature, but I wonder which will have a longer life than Casey. I venture to predict that it will find its way before long into the school readers, that surest path to immortality.

In fact, since these articles were printed in the *Saturday Evening Post*, I have had a letter from a gentleman in North Dakota who tells me that Casey already is included in a reader in use in the local schools. And by constant repetition I have made it my very own, while the modest and all but unknown author even has had his rightful claim to his child disputed by some ten thousand impostors.

Returning one Sunday evening in May, 1926, from an excursion of The Lambs to West Point, where the Cadets had called for Casey, and I had struck him out on the Military Academy's new stadium athletic field, I found a letter from Manila in my letter box at The Lambs. The envelope contained only a clipping from the *Manila Times*. The clipping read:

The exercises at the Sulu provincial high school took place on Tuesday evening, March 23, and the following program was rendered by the students:

Orchestra selection.
Declamation, by Josefina San Augustin, salutatorian:
"The Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight."
Trio, High School Girls.
Dance of the Roses, by Fifth Grade Girls.
Declamation, by Ricardo Bautista, valedictorian:
"Casey at the Bat."
Address, by the Rev. F. D. Sholin.
Vocal solo by Norah Maulana.
Selection by the High School Boys' Bamboo orchestra.
"Good Night, Ladies", sung by High School Boys.
Address and presentation of certificates, by Mr. G. G. Bradford.

This is the same sultry Mohammedan island across from Borneo, where the wild man came from, that was so remote from our world in 1902 that George Ade made it the locale of the first and best of his musical comedies, "The Sultan of Sulu." George Moulan was the Sultan who had encountered the cocktail for the first time and was impelled to greet the suc-

ceeding dawn, not with "Allah il Allah", but with the minor chord dirge:

R–E–M–O–R–S–E,

The water wagon
Is the place for me.

Shall we give up the Philippines? Never! Their Americanization now is complete.

Pop Anson's Chicago White Sox were playing the New York Giants, James Mutrie, manager, at the old Polo Grounds, Fifth Avenue and One Hundred and Tenth Street, the middle of May of 1888. Digby Bell had converted me to baseball several years earlier. We were at the Polo Grounds every free afternoon, and both of us for two years had given an annual Sunday-night benefit for the Giants, who had no world-series money to look forward to in that day. In appreciation, the team had presented each of us with gold-headed canes inscribed "From the boys to our best boy friend." That and the friendship of Buck Ewing, Tim Keefe and John M. Ward were my proudest chattels.

Bell and I suggested to Colonel McCaull, for whom both of us were working, that a baseball night, with the White Sox in one row of boxes and the Giants in an opposite row, would be a

happy idea for all hands, and he embraced the suggestion.

Archibald Clavering Gunter, author of "Mr. Barnes of New York", "Mr. Potter of Texas", and other great successes of the eighties, saw the announcement and looked up McCaull at once.

"I've got just the thing for your baseball night," Gunter told him. "It's a baseball poem I cut out of a Frisco paper when I was on the Coast last winter. I've been carrying it around ever since. It's a lulu, and young Hopper could do it to a turn."

Gunter had the clipping with him and passed it over. McCaull read it, slapped his knee and agreed. That was a Wednesday afternoon. Wednesday night McCaull gave me the clipping and explained the object. Being quick study I stuck it in my pocket and forgot it. The series between the Sox and the Giants opened on Thursday and I, need it be said, was at the game. Thursday night a telegram from Onset Bay brought me word that my twenty-months-old boy had diphtheritic sore throat and that the crisis would be reached that night.

I was frantic. I slept little that night and early Friday morning found me camping on the

steps of Wallack's, directly across from the Western Union office next door to Daly's Theater. There had been a violent storm in lower New England during the night, the wires were down in the morning and no word came from Onset Bay.

I was sitting there when McCaull appeared about 9:30. I told him the circumstances, "I can't commit this piece," I declared. "I can't call my name until I hear how the boy is."

"Surely, surely," he sympathized. "Forget all about it, my boy."

Near eleven o'clock two clerks dashed out the Broadway door of the telegraph office, shouting my name. The wire had come through and they had not waited to write it down. The crisis was safely passed. That twenty-months-old son is vice president of the United States Mortgage and Trust Company of New York to-day.

I burst into McCaull's office with the good word. When I had quieted down I recalled the clipping.

"I'll study it now," I told him. "Just give me the office to myself for a while." He did, and in less than an hour I had memorized a poem that requires five minutes and forty seconds to recite, as I have had many an opportunity to test.

McCaull didn't credit the feat, particularly in my excited state, but not wishing to question my word, he pretended to be so interested that he wished to hear it then and there. And then and there I gave it without an error.

This quick study is a matter of gratitude rather than of pride with me. It has saved me much work. When I first was cast for the Lord Chancellor in Gilbert and Sullivan's "Iolanthe", I was warned by fellow actors of "The Nightmare Song." This song is just what its title implies. It contains six hundred and twenty-nine words, none suggesting the word that follows, and is, I think, the most difficult memory test in all the library of the theater. I set aside a Sunday night for its study, made myself comfortable in robe and slippers in my hotel room, propped my feet on another chair, turned out all the lights but one and began on it at 9:20 P.M. I became so absorbed in the song that I forgot to light my pipe. At length I shut the book, closed my eyes and ran the words over in my mind.

"I've got you!" I shouted, tossed the book across the room and changed my position for the first time since I had sat down. As my feet came away from the chair that had supported

them, my knees popped, my back cracked and my feet stung with the returning circulation. I knew all the sensations of Rip Van Winkle's waking. Surely it must be one o'clock. I looked at my watch. It said 10:45 P.M., and it was running, but it was a temperamental timepiece with a chronic habit of stopping and starting again with no apparent cause. So I phoned down to the hotel office.

"Twenty minutes of eleven," was the operator's answer.

I had committed "The Nightmare Song" in an hour and twenty minutes. I dressed and went to the Lambs Club to boast about it. My fellow Lambs were so skeptical that they bet me the drinks that I did not know it. In the barroom of the club I sang the song letter-perfect and won.

I have strayed afar from Wallack's Theater and the night of May 13, 1888. The bill was "Prince Methusalem" and I interpolated Casey in a scene in the second act. It was, I presume, the first time the poem was recited in public.

On his début Casey lifted this audience, composed largely of baseball players and fans, out of their seats. When I dropped my voice to B flat, below low C, at "the multitude was awed",

I remember seeing Buck Ewing's gallant mustachios give a single nervous twitch. And as the house, after a moment of startled silence, grasped the anticlimactic dénouement, it shouted its glee.

They had expected, as any one does on hearing Casey for the first time, that the mighty batsman would slam the ball out of the lot, and a lesser bard would have had him do so, and thereby written merely a good sporting-page filler. The crowds do not flock into the American League parks around the circuit when the Yankees play, solely in anticipation of seeing Babe Ruth whale the ball over the centerfield fence. That is a spectacle to be enjoyed even at the expense of the home team, but there always is a chance that the Babe will strike out, a sight even more healing to sore eyes, for the Sultan of Swat can miss the third strike just as furiously as he can meet it, and the contrast between the terrible threat of his swing and the ludicrous futility of the result is a banquet for the malicious, which includes us all. There is no more completely satisfactory drama in literature than the fall of Humpty Dumpty.

If a passing automobile splashes a street cleaner with mud you do not smile; but let that

car splatter a pompous stroller in morning clothes, a gardenia in his buttonhole and a silk hat on his head, and you shout with glee. It isn't the flivver being towed into the garage that brings the grin to your face, but the straight-eight that passed you so insolently on the hill ten miles back.

The actors and the newspapermen of New York once played a game of baseball at the old Polo Grounds as a benefit for Carl Rankin. I was at first for the actors. Leander Richardson, the critic, was at third for the journalists. There were few more striking figures on Broadway in his time than Leander, and he was not unaware of it. His magnificent red beard was enough to set him off in any crowd, and he dressed the part.

This afternoon he was charming, as the society reporters would say, in his red silken beard, a white silk shirt, a flowing tie of robin's-egg blue, a broad sash of the same hue and white flannel trousers. All afternoon he stood magnificently at third and waved his sultry beard and never a ball came his way.

Late in the game some one on our side hit a high foul, one of the highest fouls I ever saw. It lingered in the hands of the angels for a time,

then slowly began its descent to the third-base line. There was no wind, no sun. There was time enough for the farthest outfielders to have trotted in and snared it, but Leander waved all aside. It was his ball and he advanced superbly to the rendezvous, raising his hands to greet it, his red beard, blue tie and sash and white shirt and trousers a pretty patriotic symphony.

Nearer came the ball. Leander braced his shoulders for the embrace. There was an inhalation of breath from the grand stand, and the ball hit the earth with a heavy plop a good five feet behind those upstretched hands. Now Mr. Richardson did not set himself up as any great shakes at baseball, but the contrast between the sublime figure he had cut at third for eight innings and the ridiculous fruition was the stuff of Casey. Few among the spectators had not sometime winced under the flick of Leander's forked critical tongue. His bitter bread returned to him that afternoon manyfold.

Mr. Jawn McGraw's athletes do not and never have played polo, and the name has puzzled many thousands of baseball fans. James Gordon Bennett, skipper of the *New York Herald*, introduced polo into the United States about 1876, and the game first was played at

Dickel's Riding Academy which stood at Fifth Avenue and Thirty-ninth Street. When the importation from India began to catch on with Bennett's crowd, they built a playing field at Jerome Park. But the park was too far out in that day and a new field was constructed at Fifth Avenue and 110th Street. The polo crowd used it only occasionally and when the Giants were organized the team was able to rent the grounds for baseball. Within seven years the new elevated railway had so expanded the city that the polo ground was cut up into building lots and a third field built under Coogan's Bluff at Eighth Avenue and 155th Street, then the terminus of the "L." The Giants moved with the polo players and in a few more years the growth of organized baseball drove polo off its own field into the suburban reaches of Long Island, Westchester and Jersey.

Casey's reception on his début made me appreciate that I had a parlor trick of sorts in him, but I never thought of using the poem regularly in the theater until the second season of "Wang", that of 1892–1893. We were playing over the same territory as the first season and I thought the show needed an added fillip. I tried Casey on an audience, found it what

vaudeville players now call a "wow", and began interpolating it nightly.

Still I had no idea of the author's identity. The initials, E. L. T., had been appended to the clipping, now long lost or destroyed. We played Worcester, Massachusetts, for one night sometime in the middle nineties, and there I met a Mr. Hammond who had sung bass in the quartet at O. B. Frothingham's church, where my mother was organist, and who now was teaching voice in the Massachusetts city. Hammond wrote me a note asking me to come to the Worcester Club after the performance. If I would do so he would introduce me to the author of Casey.

Casey's long-lost parent proved to be Ernest L. Thayer, known to all Worcester as Phinney Thayer, the son of a wealthy textile-mill owner. Thayer had been a contemporary of William Randolph Hearst at Harvard. When Senator Hearst gave the *San Francisco Examiner* to his son, the younger Hearst took Thayer to California with him, and there he used to contribute occasional verses, of which Casey was one, to the *Examiner*. In his modesty Thayer waited so long before advancing his rightful claim to the poem that it has been challenged by innumerable

others. I have met or corresponded with most of these pretenders in my time, and none has yet offered me the slightest proof or corroborative evidence to authorship, while Mr. Thayer has shown me three other manuscripts worthy of Casey's creator, and overwhelming supporting evidence. He lives to-day in Santa Barbara, California.

Thayer indubitably wrote Casey, but he could not recite it. He was the most charming of men, but slight of build and inclined to deafness and, like most persons so afflicted, very soft spoken. He had, too, at that time a decided Harvard accent.

At the importunity of his fellow club members that night he recited some of his comic verse, but begged off on Casey, pleading that this was my particular stunt. The crowd, which had been long at the bar, would not take no, however, and backed him into a corner.

I have heard many another give Casey. Fond mammas have brought their young sons to me to hear their childish voices lisp the poem, but Thayer's was the worst of all. In a sweet, dulcet Harvard whisper he implored Casey to murder the umpire, and gave this cry of mass animal rage all the emphasis of a caterpillar

wearing rubbers crawling on a velvet carpet. He was rotten! One of my theater friends, who had only the haziest of ideas where he had been the night before, said to me the next day: "Will, I think it goes better that way."

I have had other jolts to my pride in my version of Casey. There are four poems that every parlor amateur, every village life of the party, includes in his repertoire. They are "Casey", Service's "The Shooting of Dan McGrew", and Kipling's "Boots" and "Gunga Din." They have written me letters about it and waylaid me at the stage door for years.

In the lobby of a Peoria, Illinois, hotel I once was accosted by a confident young man.

"Excuse me, Mr. Hopper, but I am going to see you to-night," he said, "and I just wondered if you are going to recite Casey."

I told him that it would be an evening to be remembered if I did not.

"Good," he exclaimed. "I would just like my young lady friend to hear how some one else recites it."

Every newspaper that has an Answers column or a poetry corner reprints Casey at as regular intervals as they serve up that other perennial, the United States Government's offi-

cial recipe for whitewash. The poem is to be found, too, in Burton Stevenson's "Home Book of Verse." But the supply apparently never overtakes the demand, and I take it that many a scrapbook still contains a yawning void. To forestall a petition to Congress, I give it here again:

Casey at the Bat

The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day;
The score was four to two with but one inning more to play.
And so when Cooney died at first and Barrows did the same,
A sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest
Clung to the hope which springs eternal in the human breast;
They thought if only Casey could but get a whack at that —
We'd put up even money now with Casey at the bat.

From the photo. by Jos. Hall. Collection of Albert Davis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

THE ACTORS' TEAM THAT PLAYED THE NEW YORK PRESS CLUB IN 1889

Mr. Hopper stands at rear, Francis Wilson, seated, below him, and below the latter is Wilton Lackaye at left, James T. Powers at right

Collection of Albert Davis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

SARAH BERNHARDT AT THE TIME OF HER FIRST AMERICAN APPEARANCE IN "CAMILLE"

But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,
And the former was a pudding and the latter was a fake;
So upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,
For there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a single to the wonderment of all,
And Blake, the much despised, tore the cover off the ball,
And when the dust had lifted, and they saw what had occurred,
There was Jimmy safe at second, and Flynn a-hugging third.

Then from five thousand throats or more went up a lusty yell;
It rumbled through the valley; it rattled in the dell;
It knocked upon the mountain top and recoiled upon the flat,
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place;
There was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile on Casey's face.
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,
No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt.
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt;
Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,
Defiance gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped ——
"That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one!" the umpire said.

From the benches black with people there went up a muffled roar
Like the beating of the storm waves on a stern and distant shore.
"Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted someone in the stand;
And it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;
He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on.
He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the spheroid flew,
But Casey still ignored it and the umpire cried, "Strike two!"

"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and the echo answered, "Fraud!"
But one scornful look from Casey and the multitude was awed.
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,
And they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lips, his teeth
are clenched in hate,
He pounds with hideous violence his bat upon
the plate;
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now
he lets it go,
And now the air is shattered by the force of
Casey's blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is
shining bright;
The band is playing somewhere and somewhere
hearts are light;
And somewhere men are laughing, and some-
where children shout,
But there is no joy in Mudville — mighty Casey
has struck out.

Casey is a classic, I repeat. Certainly it is the only great American comic poem. The best of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Eugene Field, Wallace Irwin and Carolyn Wells; Bret Harte's "Truthful James", John T. Trowbridge's "Darius Green and His Flying Machine", William Allen Butler's "Nothing to Wear", Gelett Burgess' "The Purple Cow", all fall short of Thayer's poem. All are masterpieces of a kind, but Casey is a comic epic, the saga of baseball.

It is as perfect an epitome of our national game to-day as it was when every player drank his coffee from a mustache cup. There are one or more Caseys in every league, bush or big, and there is no day in the playing season that this same supreme tragedy, as stark as Aristophanes for the moment, does not befall on some field. It is unique in all verse in that it is not only funny and ironic, but excitingly dramatic, with the suspense built up to a perfect climax. There is no lame line among the fifty-two.

And so, although it might be thought I should have had my fill of Casey, I hope to go to bat with him for as many more seasons before we both strike out. I am not yet being pushed on to the stage in a wheel chair, but when an actor has been before the public as long as I some of his audience come to expect it. I observe and frown upon a tendency to quote Lewis Carroll's lines at me:

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head ——
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

A man being as young as he feels, I am a flaming youth. My voice and limbs still perform easily all that I ever have asked of them, and quite unconsciously, I say "Sir" to men younger in years. In Philadelphia, last spring, I had my tonsils removed on a Sunday morning and played as usual on Monday night without missing a performance. I was interested to read a few weeks later that Mr. Gene Tunney, a lad not yet thirty, who fights for a living, also had parted with his tonsils. In a bedside bulletin Mr. Tunney's manager assured an anxious public that the patient would be out again within a week.

Temperamentally oblivious of the passage of time, I am periodically startled at being confronted with some tangible evidence of the fact that much water has flowed under the bridge. I was flabbergasted when my son told me at twenty-three that he was about to marry. For a week I had rheumatic pains, and that was twelve years ago.

Two years ago I played a five weeks' engagement in Newark, New Jersey. Every Monday night the mayor and party occupied a box, and always he came behind the scenes for a word with the company. On one visit he

brought a guest, the head of the health commission. That gentleman expressed his very warm pleasure at meeting me and told me that he and his fellow board members would be delighted to have my assistance in promoting a local health week.

"We are having a mass meeting at the auditorium next week," he explained. "We would regard it as a great favor if you would address the audience."

"What would you have me say?" I asked, having no pet health rules whatever of my own, beyond a normal moderation in all things.

"Oh, anything along the lines of what habits to cultivate, what to eschew to promote a long life," he said. "It is not alone what you might say, but the example of your presence."

And in his enthusiasm he added, "You know, Mr. Hopper, that you have reached the age when most men are thinking of death."

I am not, despite the New Jersey gentleman's impression, a contemporary of either Junius Brutus Booth or Jenny Lind. These reminiscences may suggest that I am in my anecdotage, but I am not yet in my dotage. Yet for a moment one hot August night when I was fifteen years or so younger than I am now,

I feared it might be so. "The Fortune Hunter" was in the midst of its long run at the Gaiety Theater, the same house that later saw the even longer runs of "Turn to the Right" and "Lightnin'." Jack Barrymore made one of his earliest successes in this play. I knew him and every one else in the cast with one exception. That was Charles Fisher, then a man of more than seventy, who played the banker whose convulsive twitching of the eye was so misinterpreted by Barrymore.

It was a sweltering night. There was not a breath of air in the theater unless it was the distingué air of the patrons, and that was hot air. During an intermission I went backstage to visit and found the cast all sitting in the alley, fanning and mopping. Some one introduced me to Mr. Fisher and I made a point of emphasizing my enjoyment of his work, really feeling very sorry for the old gentleman, who, on such a night, looked more nearly ninety than seventy.

"This is a very great pleasure, Mr. Hopper," the veteran told me. "I have wanted to know you for many, many years. My old father often has spoken to me of you and his friendship with you."

I maintained a commendable composure at

the moment, I trust, but I never have been quite the same since.

It was true. The father of that venerable actor had known me. Fisher's father, I recalled, had been the aged doorkeeper at Mrs. Drew's Arch Street Theater, Philadelphia, when I played there in 1880 in "One Hundred Wives" in my third season on the stage.

IV

HOW NOT TO ACT

Once I saw a great actress play Madame X. Another time I saw a less-gifted actress play the rôle. I could write from here to the outskirts of Omsk on the art of the actor — but stay! I do not intend to. I can make my point by contrasting those two performances.

The great actress was Sarah Bernhardt. The performance was a benefit at which she gave the second act of the play. Madame X returns to the husband she has betrayed and left eighteen years earlier, and begs humbly for a glimpse and a word with her son, whom she has not seen since he was a child of two. Meanwhile she has sunk to infamy. Of course she will not betray for an instant to the son that she is his mother, she pleads to the father, but oh, for pity's sake, just a fleeting sight of him in his man's estate! The husband refuses sternly, as he is entirely justified in doing in ethics; she is not a woman of one mistake. But the audience will hate

him if the actress playing Madame X is competent.

Bernhardt's performance implied such grief, despair and mortification that the audience suffered as she pretended to, yet seemingly she did little. She did not tear her hair, distort her face, clutch her breast nor bite the scenery. Rather she stood passive, as if benumbed with contrition and sorrow. When the husband ordered her from his house she walked trance-like to the door. In the doorway she swayed almost imperceptibly and supported herself with her hand on the jamb. Then she passed through the door, but four fingers of her right hand remained in view, gripping the casing in a last despairing gesture.

The actress was gone from the stage, not to reappear, but with those four inert fingers she accomplished more than all the glycerine tears and soprano shrieks that ever were uttered. A gasp of sympathy ran through the house, and when the husband advanced to the door and without a word brutally wrenched the fingers from the jamb and flung the hand out, an inhalation of horror rose from the seats. The scene left us trembling with vicarious emotion.

A great and highly temperamental actress had just completed a strongly emotional scene. Of course she must have collapsed, exhausted and nerveless, into the arms of her devoted maid, and denied herself to all visitors for hours. They always do, we have been told, since the first press agent discovered that we liked to hear it.

I was not backstage to see, but four or five years later Bernhardt was playing Madame X on tour. Somewhere, where our routes crossed, she gave an extra matinée and I was enabled to see that stirring performance again. Her manager, E. J. Sullivan, saw me in the house and asked me backstage to meet her.

"Oh, wait until after the last act," I protested. "She must be fearfully wrought up now."

"Come on, come on!" Sullivan said impatiently, and I followed him. The second act was on, and we waited behind the scenes, listening to the dialogue between the mother and father and visualizing the scene. We heard the man shout "Go!" Bernhardt appeared in the door, swayed a trifle, put her right hand on the jamb for support, then passed through the door, her four fingers still clinging to the casing.

As another audience gasped in agonized sym-

pathy the actress saw us standing there. Her face brightened, and waving her free hand, she said cheerily:

"Hello, Eddie! Isn't this a wonderful house though?"

Her fingers wrenched loose and her hand flung aside, she advanced to greet us, and while the audience still sobbed she asked us to her dressing room and there chatted amiably of everything save the woes of her heroine, until the call for the third act.

Of course she did, as any actor should have known without seeing. Acting is an art, not a spasm. The actress who makes her hearers weep is not the one who weeps herself but the one who seems to weep. Had she not been completely self-possessed, making her every move deliberately with shrewd preknowledge of its effect, she would have had no effect. Had she lost control of herself for an instant, that instant she would have lost control of her audience. Bernhardt, of course, was in the keenest sympathy with the rôle, but she was controlling that sympathy and using it, not permitting it to use her.

The secret of fine acting, the secret of all art, is suggestion, the inflaming of the spectator's

imagination; and the secret of suggestion is studied repression. The actor, the writer, the painter who flies into a fine frenzy overacts, overwrites, overpaints. The best writing, that which reads without effort, is that which has been rewritten most often. The artist who tries to be literal leaves the imagination cold. The photograph is literal. It copies, and the clearer and harder its accuracy the worse it is. The rogue's gallery photograph is fine realism. The portrait suggests; it glides over the superficials and gets at the soul of the sitter. The first defect of the movies is that nothing has been left to the imagination. When little Eva ascends to heaven in the films she sprouts her wings before your eyes and flaps aloft. The spectator wonders how it was done, and forgets that he is seeing a child die.

The other actress was the leading woman of a stock company. The company was a good one and the actress intelligent. I met her at a dinner party on a Sunday evening following a dress rehearsal of Madame X, which was to be the next week's bill. I congratulated her sincerely on the opportunity.

"Oh, Mr. Hopper!" she wailed. "I appreciate the possibilities of the part, but I dread it.

I find myself living the rôle and overwhelmed with the terrific pathos of that poor woman. It exhausts me. At dress rehearsal I broke down twice."

I made some polite response, but to myself I said, "If that is so, dear lady, you are going to flop." She did. I was able to see a matinée. She had not been on the stage three minutes before it was apparent that she was not thinking of herself as an actress artfully portraying a rôle, but as a woman overwhelmed with misery. Very early in the play she reached her climax and had nothing left for contrast in the bigger scenes. In life, grief is not necessarily majestic; often it is a bit ludicrous. One may respect and pity the tears of a weeping woman and yet find her streaked and swollen face and reddened eyes a little ridiculous. And so in the scene which Bernhardt had made so arresting, this second actress seemed rather to be a bride sniveling over her first burned biscuits or a matron grieving over the marriage anniversary forgotten by her husband, than a figure of stark tragedy.

The lady was entirely sincere, I believe. She had heard that an actress must live her rôles, and had believed it. A better actress

might have struck such a pose, but she would not have acted upon it. There is a bit of charlatanism in every trade, and the pose has been a common one at times among women of the stage.

I saw Miss Olga Nethersole give a fine and craftily contrived performance of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" in Chicago once. Mrs. Tanqueray kills herself. Once in the spectator's seat I, actorlike, am almost as ingenuous and impressionable as a school girl. I go to see a play to be amused, to be stirred, not as a visiting mechanic studying the machinery, and I was so moved by the tragedy I had watched that, despite my professional training, I hesitated to accept the invitation of Louis Nethersole, her brother and manager, to go backstage and meet the star. Instinctively I thought of myself as intruding on death. But I went, and found her, of course, as self-possessed as if she had been playing a George M. Cohan heroine.

Later in the week the Chicago Press Club gave Miss Nethersole a luncheon. I was a guest, and being asked to speak, took my text from my experience at seeing her in front of and behind the curtain and its bearing on a fundamental of acting. When I had sat down a

member of Miss Nethersole's company whispered to me, "Now you have put your foot in it."

In as much as my feet are extensive, I trembled. It smacked of a serious offense. So it was. I had, in fact, annoyed the guest of honor, clumsily forgetting that she had persistently exploited herself as an actress who, while on the stage, lived, not acted, her rôles, with a consequently appalling emotional drain. Her public loved to think of her as being half carried to her dressing room by sympathetic attendants.

As a spectator I have seen a number of unforgettable performances in the theater, among them Edwin Booth in "The Fool's Revenge", Mme. Janauschek as "Brunhild", Joseph Jefferson as "Rip Van Winkle", the elder Salvini's "Othello", Mme. Bernhardt's "Camille" and "Madame X", and Adelaide Neilson's "Juliet." One only of these memories has been effaced. In the glamour of Miss Jane Cowl's Juliet I forgot the performance of the talented English woman. It has been said that no actress is competent to play Juliet until she has reached an age where she has ceased to look the part of that lovely sixteen-year-old daughter of the

Capulets. It is no longer true. Miss Cowl had all the illusion of youth that Miss Neilson and other great Juliets lacked. Even technically she gave a finer performance. In the balcony scene, Miss Neilson dropped flowers one at a time to Romeo. Miss Cowl did it better without an adventitious aid.

I was stumbling out of the theater in a romantic haze when Adolph Klauber, Miss Cowl's husband and manager, stopped me and asked me backstage.

"Tell her how you enjoyed it," he said. "She will love it."

But I, who had seen a lovely girl kill herself, forgetting footlights, curtain, audience and all, demurred. "I wouldn't lose the illusion for anything," I told him. "Give her my love and tell her that the fact that I do not want to see her is the truest proof of my appreciation."

He laughed at me and shoved me ahead of him. Miss Cowl was standing in the door of her dressing room, and in my impulsive way, I said, "Oh, Jane! I can't tell you. I have no words for it." My lachrymal glands were working overtime.

"No one ever has said more," she told me and

took my hands. To relieve the tension I felt, I turned to the subject of her hair.

"What have you done with it?" I asked. "It is incredibly beautiful. You look eighteen."

"I ought to," was her answer. "It cost me $356," and she lifted off a wig, a magnificent set of fabricated tresses.

Once my impulsiveness was not so kindly received. I had seen Mrs. Fiske in "Divorçons" and in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles", two rôles lying at opposite poles and each superbly done. I marveled that any one could achieve such versatility, and happening to meet Harrison Grey Fiske I spoke eloquently to him of his wife. A few days later I chanced to dine in the same restaurant with Mr. and Mrs. Fiske. He stopped by my table and asked me to tell Mrs. Fiske what I had told him.

I begged off. "What does she care about my opinion?" I objected. "Minnie Maddern Fiske has had about all the praise any one can accumulate in one life, and I am only a clown to her."

But I was only too happy to have him wave my deprecations aside and lead me over, and encouraged by him, I unbosomed myself to Mrs. Fiske of my admiration for her art.

I had not gone far when the lady interrupted with, "Thanks so much; let us change the subject."

She simply dumped Niagara Falls on me; so when I was presented with a similar opportunity to tell Miss Maude Adams how highly I thought of her, I felt something more than my usual diffidence. It was the last night of the long run of "What Every Woman Knows" at the Empire Theater and my first and last opportunity of seeing it. I never have witnessed such emotional adulation in the theater. It was hysterical. Her devotees pelted the stage with flowers and enforced so many curtain calls that the last act did not begin until 11:08 P.M.

After the show I went backstage to see Richard Bennett, who was supporting Miss Adams in the Barrie piece. A mob of three hundred women and men was standing in a drizzling winter rain at the stage door in the hope of being able to touch Miss Adams' hand or dress as she left the theater, and the ogre, Alf Hayman, was at his perpetual task of guarding her from the approach of any one. No great actress, or minor actress for that matter, ever has led such a secluded life as the girl who was

born Maude Kiskadden. I have been told that her never broken rule of not being interviewed and the nunlike seclusion of her private life originally were part of a carefully premeditated plan on the part of Charles Frohman to enshroud her in mystery and thereby stimulate the public's interest. Whether that is true or not, Miss Adams found this inviolate privacy pleasing and has maintained it ever since.

Knowing this, I should not have thought of intruding, but Bennett, against my wishes, sent her word that I was backstage in the hope of seeing her. Her maid was back a moment later and whisked me past Alf Hayman's forbidding frown.

"I know you wouldn't have come behind to see us if you hadn't nice things to say," Miss Adams greeted me. "Now just say them, please."

"I'm afraid to, Miss Adams," I said. "If I should I fear my volubility might smack of insincerity. It seems that I gush," and I told her of my experience with Mrs. Fiske.

"Then go right ahead and gush," she replied. "I am going to sit back, close my eyes, not say a word and just listen."

Possibly I did gush. Certainly I told her with all my heart how I had been thrilled and delighted, and never have I been more sincere.

"Beautiful!" she applauded when I had finished. "I feel as renewed as if I had spent a week in the Adirondacks."

All this in support of the truth of acting. The acrobat or the dancer may leave the stage exhausted, but an actress who knows her business no more swoons at the finish of her big scene than Whistler had to be revived with smelling salts on completing an etching. The poor actress puts her heart into the rôle, the trained actress puts her head into it.

Mr. George Arliss has said it perfectly in one short sentence: "The art of the actor is to learn how not to be real on the stage without being found out by the audience."

A revolution in the theater from artificiality to realism has taken place in my time. It has been a change for the better, by and large, but much nonsense has been and still is talked of stage realism.

Incidental music and the soliloquy were theatrical devices in good standing long after I became an actor. The soliloquy was the drama's self-starter. At the rise of the curtain

one of the characters, usually the faithful old servant, entered, and talking to himself, dropped the necessary clues to get the plot going. It was brief and effective, but it also was, no one denied, stilted and theatrical. Today an audience would snicker.

So the playwrights now get out and crank, and if the motor is cold and the ignition feeble, as frequently happens, the process is laborious and painful to all concerned. It is a rare play that can leap forward with the rise of the curtain without first taking the spectators into its confidence. The playwright now either gives over a third of his first act to trying to get the play under way naturally by the force of gravity, or he puts false whiskers on the soliloquy in the hope that the audience will not recognize the discredited old gentleman.

Thus the property man rings the prop telephone. If society drama, that calls for a servant to answer, but that will not serve our purposes. We want the heroine to answer that insistent ring, or we want to keep the cast down, so we give the servants a night off and bring the heroine on, complaining about the servant problem.

She takes off the receiver, discloses her identity

and confides in the telephone, "I am absolutely alone in this big house! Can you imagine it? My maid is being godmother at some stupid christening, this is the cook's night off, and you know the butler left a week ago. What? George? You didn't expect George to be home? He's somewhere on one of his silly duck hunts. It is very awkward, what with the Gainsborough pearls in that little wall safe."

Now we are ready to get on with the play, but the distinction between talking to oneself and talking into a dummy telephone is pretty finely drawn. And if we really were to go in for realism that conversation should be varied occasionally to: "Who? Who? What number are you calling? No, this isn't Pipestone 68-J." Which would be highly realistic, but not very helpful.

Or there is the still more transparent device of the parlor maid with the feather duster. There never was another such a young woman for talking to herself, and expert cross-examination or a police third degree could not have wrung the essential facts from her better than the mere sight of a feather duster. The more sophisticated dramatists arrange it a bit better. They have the second man enter, snatch a com-

edy kiss from the maid, and remark that the motor horn that the property man has just tooted sounds like the master's car, and how surprised he will be to learn that the mistress has not been home since she went to the Meadowbrook dance on Wednesday with that dark Mr. Smithers. Yes, it was Wednesday because it was the same night that old man Clitus Coincidence was stabbed to death with the green jade scissors in his study.

When you come to dissect it, I don't know that this is such a marked advance on the soliloquy. Possibly the greatest passage in the drama is a soliloquy. In "What Price Glory", a very fine drama hailed as a masterpiece of the newer realism, the play opens with two runners and an orderly in regimental headquarters. They hold the stage alone for something like five minutes. Their conversation is clever, diverting and shrewdly in character, but for all that, its purpose is merely to prepare the way for the principal characters, and the three promptly fade into the background and remain there when the play really begins. Later in the same drama is a glaring violation of realism. The captain and the sergeant help themselves repeatedly at the bar of the *estaminet*, with no tally being

kept of their drinking and no one present to protect the interests of the house. The proprietor and his daughter are conveniently absent. The sheer impossibility of this situation will be apparent to any member of the A. E. F. or any one else with any acquaintance with French innkeepers, but the necessities of the drama demanded that the two leading protagonists have the stage to themselves.

To-day the drama has to get along most of the time without the aid of music. In the few theaters that still maintain orchestras, the first violin will be found in the alley smoking a cigarette when the drama is thickest. He used to be at his post in the orchestra trench playing "Hearts and Flowers" for the sad passages, welcoming the hero and the heroine on their first appearances with appropriate bars, and warning of the villain's first approach with minor chords, as distant thunder presages the gathering storm. Childish, perhaps, but the suggestive power of music is tremendous. It will prepare an audience as whole pages of dialogue will not. A hurdy-gurdy offstage or a phonograph unobtrusively introduced onstage can give the emotional key to a scene instantly. The motion-picture houses appreciate the power of music,

if the legitimate stage has largely forgotten it.

The revolt against the conventions of the theater can go only so far before it meets the conventional stone wall. "Let's pretend," the theater asks of the spectator and must always ask. The spectator can rightfully ask only that the pretense be convincing at the moment. A room full of persons in life never has talked and never will talk and move as a room of actors talk and move on the stage. The stage is a narrowly restricted medium, and dramatist, stage manager and players are not permitted to forget it for an instant. If an actor should wander aimlessly about the stage as he does in the home of a friend he would distract the audience's attention from other actors at the moment more essential to the story, and play general hob with the performance. He may not turn his back to the spectators because they cannot quit their seats and follow him around.

A group gathered socially in a drawing-room do not naturally talk one at a time. On the stage they must. An actor who spoke as loudly in his home or on the street as he should on the stage would be a man one would cross the street or dodge into a doorway to avoid. He raises his

voice in the theater to be heard. Inaudibility is the curse of current acting. There is no more serious offense in the theater. Of what avail to be realistic if the unfortunates back of F can not hear what you say? Some time ago I had a last-minute opportunity of seeing one of the best of the younger actresses in an interesting rôle. The best seats remaining were in the sixteenth row. She played a repressed girl and in her effort to be natural she kept her voice at a pitch that barely carried across the footlights. She was an actress of sufficient ability to enable me to read in her face something of what I could not hear, but as the play was not billed as a pantomime, my irritation and that of the bulk of the audience was justifiable.

A writer of fiction may let his characters stray over the face of the earth without restraint of space and little of time. When he attempts the same story on the stage he is in the predicament of an artist in colors restricted to black and white for his effects. The story must be told within the limits of three hours, the narrow frame of the stage, a practicable cast, the mechanical resources of the theater and the fact that the spectators cannot take the play home with them and finish it in bed.

To quote Mr. Arliss again, and I know no better authority:

"It is impossible to maintain absolute reality while writing a good play. It is quite feasible if you are content to write a bad play. If you cannot get drama and realism at the same time, as you seldom can, then there is nothing to do but to discard the realism and hang on to the drama. But it must be real at the time, under the illusion of the theater."

Or as William Winter wrote of Booth:

"He left nothing to chance. There was no heedless, accidental quality in his art. There was neither hesitation, uncertainty, excess nor error. The perfection of his acting lay in the perfect control that he exercised over his powers — his complete understanding of himself, his minute and thorough perception of cause and effect on the stage, and his consummate skill in deducing the one from the other. He acted with the ease that makes the observer oblivious of the effort and the skill which alone can produce such effects of illusion and enjoyment.

"He did not adopt the foolish theory that the true art of acting consists in doing upon the stage exactly what people do in actual life. He

knew that art is romantic and that the moment romance is sacrificed to reality, the stage is as impotent as a paper flower. An actor may be natural without being literal. He is a commentator upon life in the realm of the ideal as well as in the realm of fact. He reveals to the public the complex mechanism of human nature and the magnificent possibilities of spiritual destiny."

Often I have heard the highest compliment that may be paid an actor spoken as a belittlement. I have heard it said of John Drew, for instance, "He's not an actor; he just goes on and plays himself."

Mr. Drew could ask no finer tribute to the perfection of his art. If, in the highly artificial environment of the stage, one can seem oneself, there is an actor.

J. C. Nugent wrote in *Variety* recently of a clash between James A. Herne and an actor at a rehearsal of "Shore Acres." The man had spoken a rhythmical line in the mouthing elocution of the "reading actor."

"What are you singing for?" Herne asked.

The actor replied that the passage was poetic and that he was attempting to exploit its beauty.

"It is a good line," Herne admitted, "but

I am sorry that you appreciate it. Otherwise you might make it sound human."

At the next rehearsal the beautiful line was spoken with all the feeling of "Please pass the potatoes."

When Herne protested, the actor defended himself, saying, "I am speaking it naturally, as you instructed me to."

"So I see," said Herne. "The next thing you should learn is the difference between acting naturally and natural acting."

As Mr. Nugent pungently put it, "The stage hand who sets a chair out and ducks for the shelter of the wings is acting naturally, but he looks like a fleeting pair of pants just the same."

I learned more of what I may know of acting in a brief association with Joseph Jefferson than in all my time in the theater previously. Mr. Jefferson arranged a benefit at the Fifth Avenue Theater in the middle nineties for Charles W. Couldock, the original Dunstan Kirke in "Hazel Kirke", whom I have mentioned earlier. Couldock was growing old after thirty years in America without a visit to his home in England. An extremely good actor, he had been improvident and was in need, a tragedy then more commonplace in the theater than now.

Jefferson selected "The Rivals" as the bill and chose a cast beside which even the fine company now playing Sheridan's great comedy so successfully on tour may not be compared. He played Bob Acres; William H. Crane was Sir Anthony Absolute; Henry Miller, Captain Absolute; Nat Goodwin, Sir Lucius O'Trigger; Thomas W. Keene, Falkland; Viola Allen, Lydia Languish; Mrs. John Drew Senior, Mrs. Malaprop; Nellie McHenry as Lucy, and myself as David.

I was playing in contiguous territory at the time and would come into New York by train for occasional rehearsals. On the way from the station to the theater one afternoon I met Mr. Jefferson on the street. He took my arm and we walked together.

"People are going to expect you to clown this part," he told me, "but I know that you are not going to"; that being his gracious way of saying, "Now please don't clown it."

Most of what I have said of acting here I first heard from the lips of that gentle genius, or first realized from studying his delicate art. At one rehearsal Crane and I stood in the footlight dip not more than five feet from Jefferson as he worked over a scene with Nat Goodwin

Collection of Albert Davis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

MAUDE ADAMS AND HENRY MILLER IN THEIR
FROHMAN STOCK COMPANY DAYS

From the photo. by Falk. Collection of Albert Davis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

MRS. DREW, MOTHER OF JOHN DREW AND GRANDMOTHER OF THE BARRYMORES, AS MRS. MALAPROP

just ahead of the duel. The play demanded that the two stand at opposite sides of the stage. If he wished to make a suggestion to Goodwin, Jefferson would step out of the rôle for a moment, walk across the stage, confer in a low voice with Nat, then return to his acting position and instantly become Bob Acres again.

Many actors find it impossible to do more than walk through their parts at rehearsal. Lacking the inspiration of the audience, the applause, the laughter, the lights, and conscious of their fellow professionals standing critically about, they are awkward and constrained. I had been a notoriously bad rehearser. When Mr. Jefferson had finished I spoke to him of this, and asked how he was able to be so oblivious of the actors about him and the cold and empty house.

"Oh, my boy," he corrected me. "That is all wrong. You must not know what self-consciousness means. An actor must be superior to any circumstance. Inspiration is well enough. Avail yourself of it if it comes, but how are you to be inspired by a thirty-dollar matinée? And yet if you have any sense of obligation as an artist you must give that thirty-dollar matinée as good a performance as a three thousand dollar house. You must know so well just why you

make a certain gesture, what you will accomplish by that gesture, that you will employ it instinctively, whatever the distractions. You must be able to leave the character for a moment for something totally foreign and pick up the threads again as if you never had dropped them."

In the scene where David pleads with his master, Bob Acres, not to fight the duel, Acres sits with his back to the audience to center attention on David. In his earnestness David leans farther and farther across a table until his face almost touches that of his master. As I completed this speech at the first rehearsal, I drew back, thinking to heighten the effect.

"Oh, don't do that," Jefferson whispered. "You nullify the effect. When you get an effect, hold it, hold it! Focus all attention upon it. Your leaning forward helps the force of your lines. If you pull back at your climax you pull the audience back with you. Watch now when we play it. If you do what I say, you will get a round of applause."

I had made an amateurish blunder, but I was able at least to appreciate the wherefores of such a tip and to act upon it. I did so and the burst of applause came.

While it lasted Jefferson said to me, "Splendid, and you deserve it. Isn't that a reward?"

The greatest comedian our stage has known, Mr. Jefferson was the most sympathetic and helpful of men to his associates, and the most self-effacing. We repeated this performance for one night in Boston. The audience demanded curtain after curtain and at each Jefferson forced all of us to remain on the stage to share a triumph that was his own. The house wanted him alone and would not stop. Finally we rebelled and Goodwin, Crane, Miller, Keene and I literally forced him in front of the curtain by himself, but when he spoke it was only of his joy in the privilege of appearing with such a company.

At the same performance I was crossing the stage behind the scenes when I saw Jefferson looking through a crack in the center doors of the set, sizing up the audience, I assumed.

"That's a sight worth seeing," I commented.

"I was not thinking of the audience," he replied. "Stay a moment and watch this laughing exit of Mrs. Drew's." I stood behind him, peering over his head as Mrs. Malaprop closed her scene. When she had finished he took my arm to walk around to make our joint

entrance. "I have had the honor of playing with that lady hundreds of times, and I never have failed to watch that scene," he said.

Jefferson was dining at the Players the day after the Couldock benefit with a group of six or seven fellow actors, including John Drew, and every one else in the club crowding about his table felicitating him on his performance.

Mr. Drew did me the kindly and generous service of bringing me the news that Jefferson had remarked, "Gentlemen, I have had a very pleasant experience; I have seen a part played as well as it could be — young Hopper's David."

Mr. Jefferson's words are not to be taken literally, but even as hyperbole I cherish them, along with the praise of Mrs. John Drew, above all else. Few will remember it, but I once played Sir John Falstaff to Mrs. Drew's Dame Quickly at a special *al fresco* performance in the court of the Grand Union Hotel, Saratoga. Rose Coghlan was the Mistress Ford; Blanche Walsh, Mistress Page.

I committed the part in six hours distributed over three evenings. Billy Crane, who had played Falstaff the previous season and found himself unequal to it physically, lent me the elaborate pads that are a part of the make-up,

his wigs, and the benefit of his long research and study of the rôle, making the condition that I would spend three days at his place at Cohasset tutoring under him, another instance of very great kindness shown a young actor by a great one.

We spent most of those three days on his yacht. Crane explained to me that "Merry Wives of Windsor" was a very imperfectly constructed play, and how Shakespeare had written it in three weeks at the royal behest of Queen Elizabeth, who had enjoyed Falstaff so hugely in "Henry IV" that she demanded a play showing the rascal in love.

"You have an impossible thing to do," Crane told me. "Mistress Ford and Mistress Page have deliberately had you dumped into the Thames. Dame Quickly comes to lure you back, and within her speech of eight lines you must evidence, plausibly, a change from bitter determination never to see Page and Ford again to an eager willingness. Dame Quickly can help you tremendously in making this incredible mental switch seem convincing. By the way, who is she?"

"Oh, just some amateur Saratoga chip," I replied breezily.

"Then God help you," he groaned.

"On the contrary, Dame Quickly is none other than Mrs. John Drew herself," I reassured Crane.

"My boy, you won't have to do a thing but stand there," he exclaimed. "Let her do it."

It was true. Speaking those eight lines slowly, Mrs. Drew, with her changing facial expression and consummate art, drew me out of my sulks into a comical eagerness, without my doing anything beyond following the cues her face gave me.

Falstaff is a strenuous rôle apart from the make-up, and the make-up is the most harrowing in the theater. On a warm night it can be a torture. Crane built himself up to Sir John's bloated figure with heavy woolen leg pads, a false stomach of inflated rubber, a heavily padded coat and other stuffing that gave all the effects of the steam room of a Turkish bath. With my youth and physique, I found it an ordeal for one performance.

There was a supper at the Grand Union following the play, at which Mrs. Drew and I, among others, spoke.

"Mr. Hopper has said that this is his first time to play Falstaff," she said when she rose.

"Oddly, this is the first time I have played Dame Quickly. It is my part; I am built for it, but when I last was seen in 'Merry Wives of Windsor' I had not this contour and I played Mistress Ford. But it is a pleasure for me to say that I never have played with a better Falstaff, and I have had the honor of appearing with Mr. James K. Hackett in his famous impersonation of that rôle."

This was not the less sweet to my ears even though it was quite possible that Mrs. Drew was being more generous than critical. Two strangely diverse men agreed with her; Edward Everett Hale and Pat Sheedy, the gambler. Sheedy was so enthusiastic that he wished to back the company for a summer engagement at the Metropolitan Opera House, his only stipulation being that "the old woman" play Dame Quickly, Percy Winter play Slender, and I, Falstaff.

No actor who has reached the age of anecdotage can escape the question: Who was the greatest of them all? My answer, and that of any one who has been on the stage as long as I, must inevitably be: Edwin Booth.

Booth rescued our stage from the mock heroic. Our tragedians had ceased to be actors and

become impassioned elocutionists, thundering blank verse in the stilted, florid, declamatory style still burlesqued in the stock low-comedy character of the "ham" Shakespearean actor. When our architecture and our interiors were at their rococo worst, Booth, following the roaring Forrest, led the classic stage back to simplicity, just as David Garrick a century earlier had deposed Quin and his fellow elocutionists of the English theater. The example of Booth still prevails and has been exemplified splendidly in modern time by Forbes-Robertson's and John Barrymore's Hamlets, by Walter Hampden, Lynn Harding and Miss Jane Cowl.

I suppose there never was such a scene in the theater as that which marked Booth's return to the stage after the voluntary retirement that followed the assassination of Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth. That mad act cast a somber shadow over Edwin Booth's remaining twenty-eight years. Only the necessity of supporting his family brought him out of retirement, and he never again played in Washington. The old Winter Garden in lower Broadway was the scene. I was a child at the time and not present, but Digby Bell, who was there, never ceased to recall it.

The statement that "the demonstration lasted five minutes", or three minutes or twelve minutes is a commonplace of newspaper exaggeration. It is analogous to "the parade of thirty thousand marchers." No parade used to be thought worthy of the name with fewer than thirty thousand in line, until some one in the *New York World* office made a few calculations as to how long such a procession would be in passing a given point. That newspaper then sent out checkers to tally the longer parades. On actual count they dwindled sadly; four thousand was discovered to be an impressive procession, ten thousand almost endless.

Actually the longest demonstration of record lasted one minute and thirty-three seconds, if I am not mistaken, and was inspired by Sir Henry Irving's return to the stage of the Lyceum after a long illness. I ignore, of course, those purely artificial contests of endurance that mark the modern national political convention. They belong with the six-day bicycle races. Our imaginations have been so debauched that a minute and thirty-three seconds has a tame sound; but count ninety-three slowly, or better still try to clap your hands continuously that long, if you would appreciate what it means.

This reception of Booth, born of sympathy, love, idolatry and hot partisanship, continued for seventeen minutes, Bell said, rising and falling, but never stopping, and stimulated by the muffled roar of a mob rioting outside and the hoots and catcalls of a bitter minority in the theater. The majority wished the actor to know that they held him blameless for the insane act of his brother. Booth repeatedly tried to stem the demonstration and continue with his lines. Failing, he finally sank to a bench and wept with bowed head, the hysterical spectators sobbing with him.

Edwin Forrest, his contemporary, was touched with genius, but he was physical, while Booth was intellectual and spiritual, and Forrest, too, was of the declamatory school, his acting marred with mannerisms and elaborate artifice. While Booth was essentially a tragedian, Hamlet his greatest rôle, he was a comedian of the first rank. No one ever played Petruchio in "The Taming of the Shrew" with a finer, defter comic touch.

For that matter, no man ever was a truly great tragedian who lacked the comic sense. I doubt that a man ever reached the full measure of greatness in any vocation without that saving

grace of humor. Contrariwise, too robust a sense of humor has kept others from greatness. Excess in any emotion is disastrous.

Louis James was a case in point. Mr. James would have been recognized as one of the very great actors of our stage, I believe most earnestly, if he had not been the constant victim of his own mischievous humor. He could not resist a practical joke. James was leading man of the California Theater stock company in the days of visiting stars. Edwin Forrest was about to appear with the stock company in "Metamora", a heroic drama of the noble redskin, in which he had won his greatest popular success. As was the custom, the stock company rehearsed the play in advance of Forrest's arrival.

The cast included a child of eight, who played the part of Metamora's sister.

James drew the little girl to one side at rehearsal and said to her, "Now, my little darling, the brutal manager of this theater is not going to let my little sweetheart make the success of her life, but Papa Louis is going to tell her how she can foil brutal manager. Immediately after Mr. Forrest's first speech, speak this line, my dear, but speak it not before the

first performance; or wicked manager will take it away from you. Then once you have delivered it, the country will ring with my darling's name."

The child, thoroughly persuaded that she was the victim of the manager's jealous dislike, rehearsed in private the line James had given her. Just previous to Metamora's first entrance his Indian mother wonders what was become of him.

Forrest strode on the stage, a superb physical picture, and his mother, with a cry of welcome, asked, "Where have you been, my Metamora?"

"Out slaying the paleface!" rumbled Forrest in his deepest bass tones.

The child had no response at this point, but up she piped in a thin treble the line that Papa Louis had taught her: "When snow comes I'm going sleighing too."

History does not record the fate of that aspiring but misguided young actress.

James was just as ready to make a performance of his own ridiculous. He was playing Virginius, another popular set piece of the grandiloquent school, with his own company one season and had with him as property man, Jimmy

Johnston, as painstaking and sober-minded a man as ever jingled a cowbell offstage.

Virginius kills his daughter with his own hands to save her from some mighty Roman noble, if I remember the play. In Richmond, James went to Johnston and told him that he wished to simulate tears in his big scene.

"You must help me," the actor said. "I want you to get a milk pan, fill it to the brim with water and stand in the first entrance, just out of view of the audience. Hold the pan level with my face. Remember, the pan must be brimful and you must not spill a drop or you will destroy the scene. At the proper moment I can work my way to where you stand, turn my back momentarily and splash the water on my face. Better take up your position at the beginning of the act, as I am not able to say just when I shall be able to employ the tears to best advantage."

The literal-minded Jimmy was motionless in the first entrance at the rise of the curtain, a brimming pan held shoulder-high. James nodded approvingly.

As the act went on, paralysis rapidly set in in Jimmy's arms and the pan began to sink bit by bit. At every falter James would signal

"Up! Up!" with a flirt of the wrist. The property man would raise the wavering pan, his face purpling with the effort, and James enjoying the prank like any schoolboy, all the while declaiming the noble periods of Virginius.

At the very climax of the scene and the play, the pan wavered again. Jimmy made a mighty try at recovery, but agonized muscles would not respond and the brimming pan fell with a horrible splash and crash. And with a much louder crash, the high-flown drama came down in a nose dive into the custard pie of the ridiculous.

The good people of Richmond did not award the mantle of Edwin Booth to Mr. James.

V

CAME DAWN AT HOLLYWOOD

Before any one else can say it first, let me admit that I was no earth-shaking success in the movies. If the truth must be known, I died on the silver screen; I sank majestically beneath the oily waves of the cinema sea and never was heard of again. Not so much as a life belt or a spar was picked up. The fact that a gallant company of stage celebrities perished with me made my demise less poignant personally, but not the less indisputable.

And so it may be suggested that the lavender grapes of Hollywood are sour to my palate only because I found them beyond my reach. Be that as it may, as George Monroe used to say.

I was part of the Triangle Film Corporation, the first great flourish of that prattling infant industry. That was a scant twelve years ago, yet it will entitle my posterity to membership in good standing, if not in the Mayflower Society, at least in the Colonial Dames of Hollywood,

for time is relative and as picture history goes 1915 is somewhere back in the French and Indian War. Only six years earlier David W. Griffith, under the anonymous bushel of the Biograph, was turning out one one-reeler a day in a brownstone front house at Number 11 East Fourteenth Street, New York, and paying Florence Lawrence, Florence Turner, Mary Pickford, Flora Finch, Mack Sennett, David Miles and Bobbie Harron five dollars a day for their services. Pathé was just emigrating from France to make chase comedies in Weehawken, and Vitagraph was organizing in Flatbush. Actors and directors alike were nameless on the screen. Miss Pickford was identified only as the Biograph Blonde, and regularly confused with Blanche Sweet. English audiences demanded the names of their favorites, and to gratify this whim the London offices of the Biograph tagged Mr. Griffith's hired hands synthetically. Old posters still are extant in which Mabel Normand is labeled as Muriel Fortescue, Mack Sennett masquerades as Mr. Walter Terry, and Blanche Sweet as Daphne Wayne. All this in 1909.

The Triangle was such a brave and ill-fated enterprise that it justifies recounting. It took its name from the Big Three, Griffith, Thomas

Collection of Albert Davis, Brooklyn, N. Y.
From the photo. by Otto Sarony Co.

DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS IN
"FRENZIED FINANCE", 1905

Collection of Albert Davis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

MARY PICKFORD IN EARLIER
DAYS

Collection of Albert Davis, Brooklyn, N. Y.

CHESTER WITHEY, FAY TINCHER AND DEWOLF HOPPER IN "SUNSHINE DAD", 1915

Ince and Mack Sennett. Harry E. Aitken was the promoter, and Willie Collier, Billie Burke, Raymond Hitchcock, Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Eddie Foy, Weber and Fields, Sam Bernard, Dustin Farnum, Frank Keenan, Willard Mack, Douglas Fairbanks and myself were among the stars engaged from the speaking stage at salaries so large that they were set down as the brazen inventions of a press agent.

Griffith, Ince and Sennett went on to greater directorial glories, Aitken went down with the ship, and of this impressive array of names recruited from the theater to revolutionize the films all failed, with one exception. Fairbanks, whose salary was among the least, survived and triumphed.

W. S. Hart, it is true, was of the Triangle company and had come from the legitimate stage, but he had not been either a star or a leading man and he had played in a number of pictures for Ince before the Triangle was formed.

Aitken, whose imagination conceived the idea and whose enthusiasm and organizing ability made it a reality, first appeared on the distant horizon of the movies about 1905 as a salesman for a Chicago film exchange. Moving pictures then had been exhibited for ten years or more,

but only as a sort of animated magic-lantern show. The photoplay was not more than two years old. Films, which had originally been sold outright to exhibitors, now were beginning to be rented through exchanges, and the salesmen, such as Aitken, virtually were peddlers packing a suitcase of assorted reels from nickelodeon to nickelodeon.

Among young Aitken's customers was John R. Freuler, a Milwaukee real-estate operator who had been forced to take over the Theater Comique, a five-cent picture theater on Kinnikinnic Avenue, to protect an investment, and who found that he had no choice but to operate the place himself or close it up. He gave the orphan one pigeonhole in his desk and saw to it in chance moments, taking care as a business man of weight and dignity not to publish to his associates that he was the owner of an institution that had the social standing of a shooting gallery.

Presently Aitken asked Freuler to go his bond with the Lewis Exchange that Aitken might carry a larger stock of films. Freuler suggested instead that he and Aitken organize an exchange of their own. They did and called it the Western, with headquarters in Chicago

and branches in other cities. When the General Film Company and its closely allied Motion Picture Patents Company began to tighten its grip on the young industry about 1911, the Western cast its lot with the independents.

The first move of the independents was a defensive union remembered as the old Sales Company. It was a loose federation, full of civil wars, and ended quickly. Whereupon Freuler and Aitken organized the Mutual Film Corporation on the model of the General, and Carl Laemmle formed the Universal. Freuler took care of the operating machinery while Aitken went to Wall Street, opened an office at Number 60, interested Crawford Livingston, an investment banker, and through him the portentous firm of Kuhn, Loeb and Company. Big money had discovered the films for the first time, and Aitken was the evangelist.

Mutual began as a program producer, making the slapbang one-reel dramas and comedies that were the staple of the business. But Aitken's vision saw further than that, and as he watched the multi-reel "Quo Vadis", imported from Europe by George Kleine, and Queen "Elizabeth", a French production with Bernhardt in the title rôle, brought over by Adolph

Zukor and released in the fall of 1912, he began to reach out on his own. Through the Majestic Pictures Corporation, which was producing for Mutual distribution, Aitken hired D. W. Griffith away from Biograph. Mutual also was releasing the product of the New York Motion Picture Company, better known as the NYMPH, owned by Adam Kessel and Charles O. Baumann, ex-bookmakers at Sheepshead Bay and other New York tracks. NYMPH had both Tom Ince and Mack Sennett by this time.

Aitken, Griffith, Sennett and Ince put their heads together, and Mutual Masterpieces, the first American-made four and five reel feature pictures, were born. Aitken also put up the sixty thousand dollars that went into "The Birth of a Nation", the first great epic of the films, produced independently of Griffith's labors for the Majestic, but originally intended for Mutual release. The money was going out faster than it was coming in and the banking interests grew unhappy. Months of intrigue and dissension within the Mutual organization ensued.

Then on July 20, 1915, Ince, Sennett, Griffith and Aitken met by prearrangement in the Fred Harvey House at La Junta, Colorado, a

halfway point between the two coasts, and Triangle was the result. The company was incorporated for five million dollars with Aitken as President, Baumann as vice president and Adam and Charles Kessel as secretary and auditor respectively.

Before Aitken could get back to Number 60 Wall Street, Mutual's directors had met, deposed him as president and elected Freuler in his place. Aitken's reply was to begin signing up for Triangle all the available stars of Broadway at Klondike salaries, to lease the Knickerbocker as a Broadway first-run house with Rothafel in charge, to announce a chain of picture theaters nation-wide and of unprecedented pretentiousness, and to predict a two-dollar top scale. Not even he seriously believed that any one would pay two dollars to see his pictures in a day when five and ten cents was the prevailing scale, but it was valuable ballyhoo.

I was playing in Gilbert and Sullivan repertoire at the Forty-eighth Street Theater in the late spring of 1915 when Aitken offered me a picture contract for one year at eighty-three thousand dollars. I had not taken the movies very seriously, but I took the eighty-three thousand and an early train for Hollywood. All

my life I have had the merriest of dispositions, but I was unequal to laughing eighty-three thousand dollars off.

I was not, as I recall it, met at the Los Angeles station by an admiring and grateful crowd of fellow film actors and actresses who pelted me with roses. The men and women of the California film colony who had been laboring at twenty-five to one hundred and fifty dollars a week viewed this descent in force of the one thousand dollars-a-week high hats of Broadway with a jaundiced eye. They had toiled and sweated long in the vineyards and now that the grapes were ripe we fair-haired boys and girls of the legitimate were to eat the fruit; eat it patronizingly with slightly curled lips.

They had their revenge shortly, but not many of them remained to enjoy it, for the mortality rate of the screen always has been appalling. Of the great names of the film world in 1915, actors, actresses, directors, those who survive undiminished may be counted upon the fingers of a careless sawmill hand. In the short interval others have shot up from the obscurity of extras and bits to blaze briefly and fade swiftly, gone with the cross-word puzzle, mah jongg and last year's favorite fox-trot tune. The lords

and ladies of Hollywood of 1925, with an exception here and there, then were hangers-on on the fringes of the studios, school children or mere units in the census statistics.

Gloria Swanson was a Keystone bathing girl, recently from behind the counter of a Pittsburgh department store. Harold Lloyd was a new and nameless shadow in Hal Roach's one-reel comedies. Ramon Navarro was a Wall Street messenger. Appalonia Chalupez was dancing in a Warsaw cabaret. She is known to you as Pola Negri. There is nothing in this to any one's discredit. I cite it only to evidence the giddy romance of the institution, infinitely more glamorous, more comic, more tragic, more thrilling than the gaudy stuff that it photographs.

Producers and exhibitors were, many of them, emerging from pants factories and penny arcades. It was about this time that Marcus Loew and Joseph Schenck, both now imposing figures in the show business, were opening the Royal Theater in Brooklyn. Loew had accumulated a hundred and fifteen thousand dollars running store shows and he put all of it into the Royal, rented a picture program costing him eighty dollars a week and opened the house at

ten cents. He confined his advertising, as he always had done, to posters in front of the theater. The first day the Royal played to one paid spectator. When the lone customer was leaving the theater, Loew stopped him, told him that the performance was a dress rehearsal, that the box office had taken his money by mistake, and offered to refund the dime. The second day the gross jumped to twelve dollars, the third it went to seventeen dollars, where it might have stayed had the business agent of the stage hands' union not called with an ultimation. He demanded that Loew put a crew of five union men on the stage instanter, although the house was playing pictures only. Loew, who had no more experience with unions than he had with advertising, opened his books to the business agent, even offered to sell the union a half interest and let it run the stage, but the agent was not interested in hard-luck stories and left with a warning.

Two days later a regiment of sandwich men appeared on the streets of the Borough Hall district of Brooklyn each carrying the placard:

LOEW'S ROYAL THEATER
IS UNFAIR TO UNION LABOR
DO NOT PATRONIZE IT

Business at the box office leaped suddenly. Downtown Brooklyn, which never had heard of Loew's Royal, came around to see what all the shooting was about and Mr. Loew learned something about advertising that he never has forgotten. The Royal made a net profit of sixty-three thousand dollars that first year and carried Mr. Loew on to ownership of the most powerful string of picture and vaudeville houses in the country; to the presidency of Metro-Goldwyn, which with Famous Players-Lasky and First National forms the Big Three of pictures, all closely allied; and to a commanding position in the industry second only to that of Adolph Zukor, to whom he is closely related by ties of marriage and friendship. His son, Arthur, now titular head of the father's producing and distributing corporations, married Mr. Zukor's only daughter, and the Zukor-Loew alliance virtually dominates the business. Loew and his Metro-Goldwyn and the First National together now control nearly thirty per cent of the total seating of the country and are expanding rapidly.

The old Selig Company had discovered California as early as 1907, journeying from Chicago to finish a one-reel "Count of Monte Cristo"

around Los Angeles, but Hollywood's film history was less than three years old.

Two great stars had blazed in the new firmament by 1915, Chaplin and Mary Pickford. Chaplin, who was only two years out of Fred Karno's vaudeville and obscurity, and who had not yet gotten the Cockney out of his speech, already was a world figure. He had finished with Keystone and was in the midst of his Essanay contract when I went to the Coast, and before I left he had signed that staggering six hundred and seventy thousand dollar one-year contract with Mutual for twelve pictures. Broadway jeered at the sum as stage money, but the mint never coined better, nor did a party of the second part ever make a shrewder contract. Those twelve pictures, among them "Easy Street", by and large the best Chaplin ever made, are still going strong and have returned millions.

All the green eyes were not among the legitimate profession. Miss Pickford, whose one hundred and five thousand dollar contract with Famous Players had been the record until then, showed signs of disquiet, and had to be pacified with a share in the profits of her pictures.

Sam Goldwyn, *né* Goldfish, was making gloves

at Gloversville, New York, and denouncing the Democrats and the Insurgents who had just taken the tariff off the imported product. In New York one day in 1912 or 1913 on business, the disgruntled Goldfish encountered his brother-in-law, Jesse Lasky, Cecil De Mille and Arthur Friend at lunch in Rector's. Lasky was the son of a Jewish merchant of San José, California. In the time of Queen Lil, he played cornet in the Royal Hawaiian band, the only non-native in the band. He turned up in Nome during the gold rush, tried his hand at newspaper reporting in San Francisco, drifted into vaudeville as manager of Hermann, the magician, became a vaudeville producer and made much money, most of which he lost in introducing the cabaret into America. Incredible as it seems, the cabaret is only sixteen years old on these shores. The first was the Folies Bergères, as faithful a copy of the Parisian institution as the time and locale permitted, which Lasky opened in Longacre Square in the spring of 1911. There was a $2.50 admission fee. That was more than most Broadway theaters were charging in that day, and New York could not see it.

Cecil De Mille's only claim to notice lay in the fact that he was the younger brother of

William De Mille, an actor. Friend was a lawyer with some theatrical interests. Before the luncheon checks were paid, Goldfish, Lasky and Friend each had put up five thousand dollars. De Mille took the fifteen thousand dollars westward, found a stable in Vine Street in a Los Angeles suburb called Hollywood, and ground out the first of the Lasky pictures, "The Squaw Man." The afternoon of the luncheon, Lasky and Friend had looked up Dustin Farnum at the Lambs Club and signed him up for the lead in the picture. Farnum had starred in the stage production some seasons earlier. Lasky and Friend offered him a fifth interest in the new company as his pay, but Farnum demanded and received cash in hand, a decision he has had ample leisure to repent.

My first picture was "Don Quixote." As I studied Cervantes' story, which I had not read until then, I fell captive to that mad, lean knight, as have all who ever read him, and forgot all my actor's disdain for the films. No boy or girl newly raised to stardom ever began his first picture with greater zest than I. I thought I saw before me an opportunity to recreate an immortal character of fiction in a fashion impossible to my own stage. But my new enthusiasm

wilted progressively, once the camera began to grind.

The actor in the films is the creature of the director. The director is an important factor in the speaking stage, more so than the spectator often realizes, but in the pictures he dwarfs the players. They are puppets dancing at the ends of strings to his piping, seldom knowing anything of the sequence of the story they are enacting and little of its sense; theirs not to reason why, theirs but to clown or cry when and as a megaphoned voice instructs them to. No more initiative is expected or desired of them than of a squad of soldiers being drilled by a top sergeant in the manual of arms.

Perhaps if "Don Quixote" had fallen under the direction of D. W. Griffith it might have been a mark to date from in pictures, but Griffith's heart and most of his time, as far as I could observe, were going into his spectacle "Intolerance", which he was producing on his own. He did write and direct "The Lamb", Douglas Fairbanks' first picture, and I have been told that when the film was finished he said to the actor, "You'd better take your monkey shines to Sennett; they're more in his line."

No film is shot in the sequence in which it

is shown on the screen. All the scenes falling on one location are taken in any order that the director sees fit, until that set, or location, is disposed of. The final fifty feet of a photoplay may have been among the first to be shot.

Our first set was a stable built in the studio. For five hours of a hot California day I rolled in the straw of the stable, which I shared with every sand flea and ant in California, clowning low comedy, much of it written, not by Cervantes but by a scenarist; stopping only to swab the perspiration that drenched me and doing that only because beads of sweat on the face photographed as pockmarks, when the director announced, "Now, Mr. Hopper, we will have the death scene."

It appeared that the stable set had to be removed to make way for another and that my death throes were down in the continuity for the stable.

I protested. "I want this death to signify something more than decomposition," I said bitterly. "It is symbolical. At least let me know why I die."

Not even the director, it developed, knew that at this stage of the proceedings.

"My dear sir!" I balked. "You might just

as well ask me to be nauseated now and give me the emetic three weeks later."

But die I did, then and there. Cervantes saw fit to kill his hero of brain fever, but Hollywood's he-men all die with their boots on, and it was down in the scenario that I was to be shot. So I fell mortally wounded, why or by whom I had not then the remotest idea, and contorted my face and limbs this way and that way as the megaphone told me to do, for all the world like a fat woman on her bedroom floor taking her daily dozen to the voice of a phonograph record. I did sneak in a little dying of my own, and — may I say it? — it was pretty good; also as realistic as my cinema collapse, which was to come.

We were twelve weeks on "Don Quixote." The film ran seven reels in its final form. Its only success was in Latin America, where the story was more familiar to picture audiences than in English-speaking lands. Present-day audiences would recognize the names of only three members of that company, Monte Blue, George Walsh and Fay Tincher. Blue and Walsh have risen to stardom and Miss Tincher to a considerable fame as a comedienne and character woman.

Blue, ten years ago a newcomer and an unknown, doubled for me in the extra-hazardous scenes. Having in mind Sir Loring in Conan Doyle's "The White Company", who had vowed that he would wear a blinder on one eye until he had accomplished some noble purpose, I had suggested to the director that we have Quixote pledge himself to ride backward on Rosinante as one of his fantastic vows. That, in turn, suggested having the don brushed off the back of his faithful steed by a low-hanging limb.

Blue took my place, the old hack set off at a decrepit trot for the tree, the branch performed its part perfectly and Blue turned a complete somersault and landed with an appalling thud on his back on the sun-baked California earth. A sympathetic shudder scurried up my spine.

Blue lifted his head from the ground far enough to catch the eye of the director and asked artlessly, "Was that all right, Mr. Dillon, or do you want me to do it over?"

There's no keeping down a lad of this spirit. I marked him then as a young man going somewhere. The script called for George Walsh to throw himself into a mountain torrent, whence Don Quixote was to endeavor to rescue him.

I am not exactly a leaping rainbow trout and shuddered at the prospect, until I learned that the invaluable Monte would double for me again. But when the available mountain torrents came to be canvassed all were found to be dry. Mr. Walsh might incur a fractured skull, but he must give up all hope of a watery grave. With traditional resourcefulness I summoned up from my exhaustless store of classic lore the demise *à la* Cleopatra.

"Don't fake it with the harmless and invaluable gopher snake, which happens to be protected by law," I counseled, with an artistic integrity born of the knowledge that it was Walsh who was to be the serpent's playmate, "but get a snake with a punch. California won't miss one rattler more or less."

Dillon sent off to a Los Angeles dealer for eight dollars' worth of snake and got for his money a kindly old gentleman reptile with eight rattles and a button, whose altruism had been enhanced by the lancing of his poison ducts. Emmett Rice, an extraordinary character in charge of the zoo on the lot, whose easy and utter dominance over all his charges was uncanny, appeared with the reptile wrapped around his arm, laid it on the sand, coiled it with a finger,

chucked it under the chin and lifted the head in the manner of a photographer arranging a sitter.

The close-ups of the snake taken, Walsh gingerly picked it up some six inches back of its rearing head and bared his bosom. This was followed in the completed film by a flash-back showing me galloping madly on Rosinante to the rescue. In his intense distaste of the snake, Walsh unconsciously squeezed it too tightly for its comfort and it turned and struck him on the forefinger. The actor screamed and hurled the rattler at least thirty feet into the air. Rice shot out an arm and caught his pet as it descended. It coiled around his arm, he stroked its head soothingly and the snake was restored to placidity in an instant. The scene had to be retaken and Walsh was careful the second time to seize the reptile just behind the head.

After we had used up five hundred feet on the scene, some pedant from the intelligence corps sent out a memorandum to the effect that the rattlesnake was not indigenous to Spain. Walsh balked at any further association with the family Ophidia, so the rattler's castanets were painted out in the developing room and it appeared ultimately on the screen as a Spanish adder minus the alarm-clock tail.

Titles are as common as cafeterias and their linen sometimes as soiled in Hollywood these days, but not so in '15. Beerbohm Tree, I imagine, was the first knight to grace those shores. I had known him in London and the deference paid him as actor-manager of His Majesty's Theater. The British stage-door keeper tips his hat to the actor and the scene-shifter steps aside to permit one to pass. Once when I was playing in London an English actor asked me if I did not find this respect agreeable, and miss it when bowled over by the stage hands at home and greeted by the door man with an "Evenin', Cap", if at all.

"I do," I agreed. "But remember there are compensations. In America, where the door man does not tip his hat to me, I likewise do not have to tip my hat to the producer, as do you. It is a fair exchange."

Sir Herbert was anything but a snob, but I feared for his Old World sensibilities in the, at that time, rampant democracy of the movie lot. Accordingly I tried to prepare him for the reception he might expect, more particularly from the cow-punchers.

"They will have no thought of insulting you, but they will be startlingly matter of fact," I

told him. "It is a fundamental doctrine of the Western American that you are no better than he is. It is understood, of course, that he is no better than you."

"Oh, I quite understand," Tree reassured me, and he did, for the riders were offering him their makin's the third day. The Los Angeles reporters met him at the station and addressed him variously as "Sir," "Your Lordship" and "Sir Tree." One of them, sensible of the confusion, said, "May I ask just how you should be addressed?"

"My dear boy, call me Oscar," Tree told him in a stage whisper.

Another young man, who had been called in hurriedly from police headquarters to catch the distinguished visitor, asked him what he did when in London, and the actor replied that he played at His Majesty's Theater.

"I never knew the King had a theater," the police reporter exclaimed.

Tree passed triumphantly through the reception, but once in the motor car which whisked him to Hollywood he turned to his daughter, and said, "If I only could capture that type for the stage, our fortune would be made." He had the police reporter in mind.

The worst ordeal of the pictures, I found, was the getting up with the working world and being on the lot in make-up by nine o'clock. Photography is all but independent of sunshine now, but it was not then. It was the high percentage of sunshine in Southern California, of course, that located the industry there to begin with. Actorlike, I had been accustomed all my adult life to going to bed with the arrival of the milkman and getting up about one o'clock in the afternoon. The workaday world returns home at five o'clock and gives the evening to recreation. The actor does not finish work until his audience is ready for bed. He then eats, and enjoys his leisure. He might, you may suggest, be in bed himself by midnight and up by eight, with the forenoon free, but leisure comes after work, not before, as all night workers know.

A lesser nuisance of picture routine is the necessity, when on location away from the studio, of appearing in public in costume and make-up. It is such a commonplace that the native does not bat an eye; would not, in fact, turn a head to see Lady Godiva ride by *au naturel* on her milk-white palfrey, but it gives the tourist something to write home about. I never ceased to feel like a cage of monkeys. My make-up for

Quixote was a ghastly thing, suggesting a death mask. It registered naturally in the camera but I was an apparition to the eye. We were on location in Santa Barbara on one occasion and I had, as usual, made up in my room after an early breakfast. My room was on the fourth floor of the Hotel Potter. As I descended in the elevator the car stopped at the third floor to admit two elderly women, voyageurs from Prides Crossing, Massachusetts. The interior of the elevator was dim and they did not see me until they were crossing the threshold. When they did they screamed as if they had encountered the devil himself, and fled down the corridor.

Tree would have none of the Hollywood working day, and he was of a dimension in the theatrical world to enforce his own preferences. Not appearing on the lot until well after noon, he necessarily had to work far into the night. It became my habit, when homeward bound in the late evening, to drop into the studio and say good night to the company. I usually found those not working before the camera at the moment perched about on various props, munching sandwiches and sipping hot coffee.

Tree was doing Macbeth, and I would have

defied Esau himself to match hair for hair with any of the company. The Seven Sutherland Sisters in the aggregate were a human billiard ball alongside the baldest and least whiskered member of his support. One day on the lot I noticed a horse Dorothy Gish was riding. The animal boasted a walrus mustache that was a close copy of the one that distinguished Mack Swayne in the Keystone Comedies. I borrowed the horse, led it around to Tree's studio and presented it to him, saying, "Here is a steed destined by Nature to play Macbeth." Tree accepted the recruit with crocodile tears in his eyes and was astride the animal on his first appearance.

As the end of "Macbeth" approached and Tree was about to return to New York to appear at the New Amsterdam Theater in Shakespearean repertoire, he was host to his many professional friends in the colony at a dinner, Douglas Fairbanks presiding. There were the usual postprandial speeches, beginning with Sir Herbert, who was in rare form. When every one had had his say, Fairbanks, in his zeal to keep the ball rolling, called on Miss Iris.

Miss Tree is a charming lady, not in the least

lacking in poise, but she was not in the habit of speaking extemporaneously over her demitasse, and she had had no thought of being called upon. Her embarrassment was so acute and so overwhelming that it communicated itself to all present, and as she pushed her water glass about and shuffled the salt and pepper cellars in mute confusion, all of us fidgeted sympathetically in our chairs and grew red in the face from vicarious discomfiture. Any banquet goer knows the sensation.

Just as she was about to sink back into her chair inarticulately, she stammered out, "I wonder why Mr. Fairbanks called upon me. In all my life I never have made a speech, but I mustn't sit down without saying something to express how truly sorry we are to have to leave and how happy you have made our visit. But now that we must go it is not alone your kindness we shall remember, nor the golden orange groves nor the sun-kissed Pacific. No, I think we shall dwell with fondest memories upon the hour of 2 : 30 A.M. in the studio, with ham sandwiches trickling through our whiskers."

It was the best speech of the evening.

The film "Macbeth" was not a success. Possibly neither the pictures nor their audiences

ever will be equal to Shakespeare unless the technic of the art should advance far beyond anything now foreseeable; certainly up to now every attempt to put him upon the screen has been a failure. Shakespeare's sorcery dwells chiefly in the magic of his words and their proper reading, both utterly lost upon the screen. Tree was like a drowning man clutching at a straw and no straw there. Reduced to pantomime, interspersed with occasional emasculated quotations as captions, the latter read haltingly and without feeling or emphasis, and with little understanding, by the spectators, "Macbeth" became a sticky tea-party salad set before a hungry harvest hand.

The camera had an inning here and there. When Macbeth looks forth from his battlements to see Birnam Wood apparently moving upon Dunsinane in fulfillment of the prophecy, and he cries out,

"Ring the alarum bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back,"

photography is able to show Malcolm, old Siward, Macduff and their men advancing from Birnam upon the castle of Dunsinane, each man

bearing aloft the branch of a tree to prey upon the superstitious credulity of Macbeth, where the stage can only suggest it.

Ordinarily it is a safe theatrical generalization that the inflamed imagination of the spectator, set off by the author's provocative words, is far more potent than the bald and literal photograph. In Shakespeare's own time stage scenery often consisted of nothing more than a placard reading "This is the castle of Dunsinane." The spectators painted their own sets in their minds, each to his own taste, under the inspiration of the author's words. Richard Mansfield's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was overpowering in what it suggested, where the film's trick photography was merely grotesque. In the stage version of "Oliver Twist" the spectator does not see Bill Sykes beat Nancy to death. He sees nothing and hears only an offstage thud and cry, but his aroused apprehension conjures up a scene that leaves him trembling. The movies insist upon showing their patrons Bill in the act of raining blows and kicks upon the cringing Nancy, and the spectator either is revolted by the brutality or is reminded that it is only make-believe.

The plot of "Macbeth" and of many of

Shakespeare's plays is good enough movie stuff, but it has not been their plots that have carried them undiminished through three centuries during which our common speech has changed so greatly that Elizabethan English is intelligible only with an effort to the man in the street and the girl who reads a picture newspaper. Once familiarized with the bare bones of Shakespeare via the movies, however, the illiterate and the semi-literate may, I surmise, be prepared to enjoy the plays as their author wrote them. If that is so, Tree's "Macbeth" and other losing ventures in pictures have served a purpose.

There is this to be said in justice for the films: Their defects are, by and large, the defects of their audiences, and they are improving as rapidly as their audiences will permit them. No entertainment rises higher than its source, and its source is the money paid into the box office. Youth, from sixteen to twenty-five, forms the bulk of the chronic picture-goers and dictates the programs. It is said that a feature picture to-day must please nine million persons to turn a profit. There is explanation enough.

Tom Ince, who died two years ago, probably was the best continuous box-office director-producer in the business. He knew the public's

likes and dislikes so well that he left a great fortune, five millions I have been told. Two years before his death he put his tried and proven formulas aside for a moment and made Eugene O'Neill's play, "Anna Christie", into a photoplay that won high praise from the reviewers for its sincerity.

Five months after the film's release the New York office wired Ince in pleased surprise, "Figures show we have turned the corner on Christie and are going to make some money."

Ince wired back, "I don't care a hoot whether it makes a dime or not. I didn't make that one to sell, but to show the critics that Tom Ince could do this art stuff if he wanted to."

The theater has had the same obstacle to contend with, but the theater happily is specialized. It is divided into drama, melodrama, farce, operetta, musical comedy, vaudeville, burlesque, minstrelsy, and the like, for as many varying tastes. You pay your money and take your choice. The dramatic producer does not have to concern himself with the tastes of burlesque audiences. They attract different sets of playgoers.

The picture exhibitors, on the contrary, whether in Nebraska or in Vermont, down-

town or suburban, city or small town, all are shooting at the same public, because they have found by experience that it is the only large group that can be depended upon to attend day in and out. This audience may want Mae Murray in "Purple Passion" one day, Tom Mix in a Western the next and custard-pie comedy on a third, but it demands all of them in the same intellectual key and artistic pitch. I have no more fear of the motion picture eventually displacing the stage than I have of the Japanese beetle destroying the Washington Monument or of jazz wiping out the American home. The theater is on the eve of a revival, and the movie will continue to flourish. For one cause or another it has captured a certain audience that the stage may never recover, but its bulwark is the vast new audience it has created. The throngs in the picture houses to-night are, most of them, persons who did not attend a theater once a year, if ever, and a certain proportion of these will graduate into the public of the speaking stage if the stage presents them with the opportunity.

And there's the rub. The theater really doesn't care much to-day how Memphis, Dallas, Wichita and Lexington spend their evenings.

They can go to the movies or stay home and play charades, as far as the show business is concerned.

When the producer is reproached for this indifference he laments that most good actors no longer will leave Broadway and that railroad rates are prohibitive. It is true that a great many actors and actresses no longer can be pried loose from Broadway. Their homes, their clubs, their friends are there, and train whistles are just a noise to their ears. But the producer's tears are glycerin. Railroad rates are up, but so are theater tickets, and as for the actor, the producer is doing exactly what he blames the actor for.

He used to burst into the office at ten in the morning, yelling a demand to know how much the show played to last night in Little Rock, and whether Monroe, Louisiana, would not answer for that open date between Texarkana and Shreveport.

To-day he is working for a long run on Broadway, big profits or no profits. If the show fails on Broadway, scrap it and try another. When he gets a winner for a Broadway run of a year or more, he makes around a quarter of a million dollars, sends the show to Boston, Philadelphia

and Chicago, then sells the movie rights, turns the play over to a broker to peddle to stock companies, and sets himself for another gamble for a quarter of a million or nothing. Little Rock, Monroe, Texarkana and Shreveport can come to New York if they want to see his shows.

The one-night-stand theater managers deserted to the movies almost in a body before the war. It looked to them like a better business, what with no stage hands and a larger share of the box-office receipts; and it was, for a time. But once the picture industry was well organized, the theater manager was at the mercy of the producer and he now pays a bonus to get a program, ties himself up to a long-time contract and pays all the traffic will bear. And to prevent any united uprising among the exhibitors, these contracts no longer expire in a body on January 1 or June 30, but are scattered over the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year. One of these days some harassed exhibitor is going to lead a procession back to the legitimate stage if Broadway gives him the slightest encouragement. Most of the fine new picture houses may be converted easily to the drama, and with their enormous seating capacity, running twelve hundred and up on the first

floor, the best shows with first-rate casts can be played in them at less than the prevailing prices.

As for radio, my generation of the stage can remember when roller skating had the theater on its back for three successive years in the late eighties. The billboards were plastered with colored lithographs of bemedaled fancy skaters, and every one was dashing from the supper table to the livery stable hastily converted into a rink. I do not expect to see radio vanish as roller skates did, but I do know that the American housewife sees too much of the four walls of her home during the day to care to spend all her evenings in the living room turning dials. She wants a change of scene, she wants to see and be seen in something more than a bungalow apron. That is a constant of human nature.

One rainy afternoon in Toronto some ten years back I took refuge in a picture house. Between films a gentleman with a pronounced English accent appeared before the curtain to proclaim the bill to follow, which was to be "Carmen", an early picture of Jesse Lasky's in which Miss Geraldine Farrar starred, supported by Wally Reid as Don José and Pedro de Cordoba as Escamillo, if I recall aright; and a right good film it was too.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the announcer began, "I wish to invite your attention to a consummate work of art to be produced in this the-ah-tur, the lawst hawf of the week — 'Carmen!' Need I say more? The titular rôle will be enacted by that superb artist, Miss — Miss ——"

Unable to recall the name of the star, he cleared his throat and detoured. "This super picture, marking an epoch in the history of the cinema, is, as I scarcely need tell you, based upon the famous story of Prosper Mérimée and the even more celebrated opera by Bizet, without question the most dramatic libretto in all the vast range of the operatic stage, and when I add that the heroine is played by that exquisite and fabulously paid artist, herself a prima donna of the renowned Metropolitan Opera House of New York City, Miss — Miss ——"

And again he missed. "Ah — ah, the locale of this lavish production is Spain, that land of song and story, of vivid light, of warmth, of color. In its course is shown an actual bull fight in that most famous of arenas, the Plaza de Toros of Seville, a very epitome of realism. And creating the rôle for the silver screen is the most celebrated Carmen of the operatic stage, a lady

whose name is on the tip of every tongue, a household word — ah, I repeat, ladies and gentlemen, the lawst hawf of the week, Carmen, played by — played by ——"

Stymied again, the speaker dropped his eyes in one frantic glance at the sheet of painstakingly memorized publicity clutched in his left hand, then finished triumphantly:

"Miss Jessie Lasky!"

The story proves nothing, but it seems to me to characterize the industry, its public blurb and its private perpetual uncertainty and distrust of itself. There is plenty to be said of the movies as an institution, an art and an influence on modern life, and plenty are saying it. I confine myself to personal grievances. First, the art does not appeal to me as an actor. The appeal of acting to those who practice it lies in the enkindling of the emotions of an audience and the reward of applause, laughter and tears then and there. This is the actor's daily bread, and the movies offer him a stone. One cheer in the hand, as far as I am concerned, is worth ten thousand in the bush. I would not swap the audible applause of the couple in the last row upstairs for all the fan mail in the post-office. So both the movies and I are satisfied.

There is another point upon which our satisfaction is not mutual. I detest the prevalent bombast, bad taste and swollen pride of the mincing, simpering, swaggering, bleating barbarians who pretty well efface the normal men and women of the business. In Oklahoma you may see chickens roosting on rosewood grand pianos in the farmyards of Osage Indians, drunk on oil royalties. Not all the Osage Indians are in Oklahoma. I am not speaking of morals, but of manners.

There is a man in one West Coast studio whose sole job is to follow a director about the lot carrying a chair to thrust under him should the director choose to sit. In five years this fine gentleman has sat wherever the spirit moved him and never looked behind him nor hesitated, secure in the knowledge that the menial was there with a chair in position. I have lived those five years in the impious hope that this shadow might some day be visited with a momentary lapse and the famous director sit unexpectedly and violently upon the floor, but at the hour of going to press this consummation so devoutly to be wished still is a wish. When this august personage wishes to communicate his royal command to any member of his court so forgetful

of their station as not to be immediately under his eye, he does but whisper. At once the cry is taken up by his subjects and passed from voice to voice until it reaches the hapless churl or churless. I have seen a woman whose income is reputed to be well above one hundred thousand dollars a year arrive breathless, blushing and stammering in his presence because of half a minute's tardiness.

When he lunches in his Sybaritic private dining room on the lot, his obsequious staff of servitors are required to anticipate his every wish without putting him to the distressing necessity of voicing it. There is a subtle nuance to his frowns. One may signify more salt, another too much salt. To the coarse and casual observer both contractions of the eyebrows may seem identical, but to the apprehensive eye of the submissive figure behind the master's chair each is eloquent and ominous. The master moves from his mansion to the studio in a foreign motor. The time fixed for the journey is seventeen minutes. Either the chauffeur makes it in that or there is a new chauffeur at the wheel to-morrow. From the moment he rises from between silken sheets until he dons his scented pajamas again, this gentleman enforces the ser-

vility and gratifies the caprices of a decadent Byzantine emperor.

More often it is the star who kings or queens it in the studio. There used to be on Broadway an actor of little fame, but a good actor and the most simple and unassuming of men, best known for his beautiful devotion to his mother and sister. Entering pictures in small parts, he soon created a niche of his own, made a phenomenal success and amassed a fortune which he could not have dreamed of. So far, so good; but this sudden and princely wealth, the adulation, the slavish deference to his least whim, his individual and unchallenged supremacy on his own lot have utterly distorted his viewpoint. He now has the air of a Russian grand duke. I cannot picture Walter Hampden sauntering down Broadway in the make-up and habiliments of Cyrano de Bergerac, yet this actor parades the streets of the cities he visits in the bizarre garb of his screen character, and glories in it.

There are exceptions — many of them — for whom my respect is enormous, for the man or woman set down in that false and incense-laden air who can retain a level head and a sense of proportion possesses a character sturdier than

many of us are blessed with. I am just as well satisfied that I was not put to the test.

As it is, I am able to say self-righteously with John Wesley:

"There, but for the grace of God, goes DeWolf Hopper."

VI

WOLFIE LOVES THE LAMBS

I do not tremble for the old age of Fred Stone, Frank Tinney and Sir Harry Lauder, nor have I ever seen Al Jolson or Ed Wynne dropping five-dollar gold pieces in the nickel slots in the telephone booths and the Subway turnstiles. Yet every one knows, of course, that actors have no business sense and that managers and producers are notoriously shrewd business men.

Oddly, however, these canny producers and managers never have been able to maintain a club of their own in New York, though their heedless charges support four or five flourishing institutions, among them The Lambs, probably the most successful club in the world, and one of the most distinctive. I say most successful, because no other club is used so intensively by its members, is given such a collegiate loyalty, or is so literally the home, hearth and headquarters of its personnel as the six-story building in West Forty-fourth Street just around

the corner from Broadway. House rule number one reads,

"The club house shall never be closed", and it never has been.

As its poet laureate sang on the occasion of the club's golden jubilee:

"Hardly a man is alive no more
Who remembers that day in '74
When five performers, none of them hams,
Got together and formed The Lambs."

About Christmastime of 1874, George H. McLean, a layman, invited Harry Montague, Harry Beckett, Edward Arnott and Arthur Wallack, all members of the cast of "The Shaughraun", then playing at the old Wallack Theater, to a supper in the Blue Room of Delmonico's Fourteenth Street restaurant after the show.

There were no actors' clubs then, and these five had no thought, at the time, of founding one. Actors, when not acting, were accustomed to loiter on the benches and sidewalks of Union Square, talking shop. If the weather were forbidding it never was more than seventeen steps to a bar, — every man's club.

In February of '75 the original five and two recruits to the circle gave a supper at the Maison

Dorée. Plates were laid for fourteen, each member to bring a guest. Only two of the guests appeared. George Fawcett Rowe, who lived in the hotel, was routed out of bed and ten sat down to what the seventies called a repast. Some one suggested that the organization be made permanent and Harry Montague gave it its name — The Lambs.

The name, as not even all of its members know, came in a roundabout way from Charles and Mary Lamb. Montague had come from England in 1874 to be leading man at Wallack's. In London he had been a member of a convivial dinner club of twelve, the traditional round-table number. Sir John Hare had formed the circle and christened it The Lambs in 1869 when the hospitality and good talk that had reigned in the home of Charles and Mary Lamb still were green in the memories of Bohemian Londoners. In the early decades of the century, "Let's go to the Lambs" was the answer to any dull evening.

The president was known as the Shepherd, the vice president as the Boy. There were twelve Lambkins from amongst whom any vacancies in the round table were filled. Occasional outings in the country were called Wash-

ings and dinners known as Gambols were held weekly for a time at the Gaiety Restaurant, then irregularly until the circle died of inanition about 1879. It had lived long enough to plant a seed across the Atlantic, though unwittingly. Montague had borrowed the name and the terminology, apparently, without consulting his London confreres, and it is doubtful if the twelve diners at the Gaiety knew of the existence of the American offshoot. All seems to have been forgiven, however, for in 1896 the crook, bell, badge of office and other ritualistic paraphernalia were presented to the New York Lambs, and the few surviving members of the long dissolved London club were elected honorary life members. Two of them, Sir Squire Bancroft and Charles Collette, still live.

The orphaned flock of muttons, bleating very softly, wandered on wobbly young legs from the Union Square Hotel to the Matchbox, to Wallack's Theater, to the Monument House, to Number 19 East Sixteenth Street in the next few years, still only a supper club. In 1877 it was incorporated. When Montague died in San Francisco the following year its numbers had grown to sixty. Another year later, when Harry Beckett retired as treasurer,

he turned over to E. M. Holland, his successor, $80.40, the entire assets. Yet, in a year more, the club had moved into its first home, rented quarters at Number 34 West Twenty-sixth Street, where I joined in 1887. I am, I believe, the third or fourth oldest member now, and I have been both Boy and Shepherd.

Montague not only was a highly capable actor, but he was the handsomest man on the stage of his day, and had been an idol from his first appearance with the Wallack Company. None of the be-bustled belles who worshipped him from across the footlights, few even of his associates, knew that he was dying swiftly of tuberculosis. Perhaps the knowledge would have made him only more darkly romantic in their eyes. When the run of the tremendously successful "Diplomacy" ended at Wallack's, Montague declined to renew his contract, and asked instead for the western rights to the new play. Although he was Wallack's most valuable player, the manager released him and Montague went to California at the head of his own company. Soon after his San Francisco engagement opened, the actor was seized with a hemorrhage at the end of the second act one night, was carried to his hotel and died before morning. Maurice

Barrymore took his place and continued the tour.

The Wallack's Theater of which I speak was not the house in which I first recited "Casey", but its predecessor, the second theater to bear the name, which stood in Thirteenth Street, and which closed its doors finally, by coincidence, on the day that Guiteau shot and fatally wounded President Garfield at the old Washington Railway station, July 2, 1881. The scene of "Casey's" first public appearance, now vanished with its two predecessors, was Wallack's at Broadway and Thirtieth Street, which was opened in the season of 1881–1882 with "The School for Scandal." The seats for the opening performance were sold at auction, bringing the then impressive sum of eleven thousand dollars, a sum which continues to impress my old-fashioned mind. Of the cast that night, I think that only Miss Rose Coghlan lives.

The Lambs lost another of its founders soon after Montague, Harry Beckett dying about 1880. He had come from England originally in 1873 with Lydia Thompson's British Blondes, the troupe from which the American burlesque show stems. The Blondes were more decorous than their name implies, but gentlemen pre-

ferred them even in the seventies, and they introduced something new into our theater, that girly-girly appeal. They toured the country with vast success, stopping one night en route to California at Dodge City, and for years after the roof of the theater of the Cowboy Capitol leaked as a token of the audience's enthusiasm and its handiness with Colonel Colt's invention.

The Lambs included many excellent actors in the eighties, but it was far from being representative of the profession. The members were fewer than one hundred, its finances hand to mouth like those of the actor of the time, and its permanence doubtful. So when The Players was launched in 1888 by Edwin Booth, who gave his home in Gramercy Park as a clubhouse, the enormous prestige of Booth and of such men as Lawrence Barrett, Mark Twain, Joseph Jefferson, Augustin Daly, A. M. Palmer, General William Tecumseh Sherman, John Drew, Stephen H. Olin and Brander Matthews on the board of directors, shoved The Lambs back into the chorus, so to speak, for a time.

The popular conception of the actor of the day was embodied in "Ham" and "Beans", comic figures of as universal currency as Pat and Mike or Mutt and Jeff. "Ham" was a lean and

funereal figure, his jowls deep purple with a three-day beard, a worn silk hat on his long, dark locks, and a hand thrust into the folds of a frock coat greening with age. He was the tragedian, the melancholy Dane. "Beans", his inseparable associate in misfortune, was the low comedian, a squat person also in high hat and frock coat, but with a fulsomely flowered vest. The two usually were depicted as stranded on a baggage truck at a village depot, or as walking the railroad tracks, their effects carried in bandanna handkerchiefs from the ends of sticks over their shoulders. The reading matter beneath the sketch sometimes ran this way:

Ham: My friend, the Duke of Mixture, is the best dressed chap in London. He has so many ties that he can't count them.

Beans: Then he ought to hire us.

The picture was not all libel. Booth had seen the American actor lounging in Union Square, mingling only with his own kind and handicapped very often in competition with British actors by lack of equal social graces and cultural background, and had given his home and founded The Players to augment both their comfort and their dignity. Here was a place where the younger American actor might make

himself at home with books, pictures, relics of great players of the past; find intellectual contact with the best minds of his own profession and with men of achievement in other walks of life, refinement of thought and manner, and ennobling associations. In his business the actor was called upon to personate artists, business men, doctors, lawyers, clergymen, men of inherited wealth. In The Players he was to be brought among such men and to see at first hand how they comported themselves, for it was part of Booth's plan that any male more than twenty-one years old in any way connected with artistic life, if only as a patron or connoisseur, be eligible. Professional theatrical critics, only, were barred.

In Great Britain, where trade was *infra dig* for gentlemen, the stage was peopled with Oxford and Cambridge graduates. The choice of a career for a younger son virtually was restricted to the navy, the army, church or stage, and many found the latter most attractive. In increasing numbers these British actors brought to America that poise born of easy association with all the elements of society. In comparison, the American actor, usually the product of a hard and rough school, often suf-

fered. He was, in fact, being crowded out of the "dress suit" and the drawing-room drama by the suaver alien to whom evening clothes were not a costume.

In addition, the British actor, playing much of his season in London and never more than a few hundred miles distant from the metropolis, was permitted a home life known to few American players. Thirty years and more ago the native actor spent so large a part of his time on the road, as many as three thousand miles from Broadway, that he could not maintain a home. The Players was to be such.

Parenthetically, our stage to-day is recruited quite as much as the British theater from the schools and the best homes, yet, curiously, the drama has not benefited as largely as might have been expected. Hand these young men and women a side of Shakespeare and they are dumb, but ask them to sing, dance or stand on their head and they oblige instantly and with professional skill.

Booth had reserved a suite on the third floor of the club as a residence, and there he passed the last four years of his life and died June eighth, 1893. Numbers of notable actors continue to be members of The Players, but Booth's

gift had fixed the club in Gramercy Park and the theatrical district steadily moved northwestward until to-day its center is forty blocks away. It is a taxicab journey to The Players; neither bus, street car nor subway passes near by. Of all the theaters that once abutted upon the club, only the burlesque houses of Fourteenth Street survive. The last neighbor of dignity, The Academy of Music, is being razed, as I write, to make way for a twenty-five story office building. The name of Booth alone is sufficient to endear this quiet club forever to actors, and at least five of its directorate always must be actors, managers or dramatists, but because of its relative inaccesibility the profession frequents it less and less. Meanwhile the more agile Lambs were following the Rialto up Broadway, and The Lambs has come, in my opinion, more nearly to fulfilling Booth's ideal than the club he founded.

The Lambs' first outing or Washing was held at Wallack's Island, Lester Wallack's summer home near Stamford, and it is recorded that three carriages held all the participants. By the time I joined, the Washings were taking place on Clay Greene's country estate at Bayside, Long Island. They lapsed about 1899 to

be revived in 1922 by John Golden, the present owner of the former Greene estate. Greene, who now lives in California, returns each year to act as Collie. But the actor is such an urbanite that he is awkward in the country. Charley Hoyt, the playwright, bequeathed his pleasant country estate at Charlestown, New Hampshire, to The Lambs, intending it to be a restful resort for the members. No one, however, could be induced to get that far from Broadway except on pay; the club sold the New Hampshire property and invested the money in the present building.

The Lambs are at their most frolicsome at the Gambols. The first Gambol was held a year after I became one of them. The club had been indulging in occasional windy banquets and Thomas Manning, who was treasurer, led a revolt. "I grow weary of these feats of dearly bought eloquence which cost so much and return so little," he protested. Clay Greene advanced the suggestion that a mimic theater be built in the dining room of the Twenty-sixth Street house, to pay the back rent of which, by the way, he had advanced one thousand dollars shortly before, one third of all the money he possessed. A makeshift stage was thrown

together and we began giving occasional entertainments, usually burlesques on current successes. There were but two that year. Otis Skinner, Joseph Holland, Kyrle Bellew and Thomas Whiffen, whose widow has become the "grand old lady" of our stage, were on the first program. Digby Bell and I were on the second.

But it was the third, held on May 1, 1889, which is remembered. Out of it grew a tragedy as strange as some of the macabre flights of Poe's imagination. That night Washington Irving Bishop, a professional mind reader, exposer of spiritualism and former associate of Anna Eva Fay, was a guest of Henry E. Dixey and volunteered on the program. Clay Greene offered himself as a subject. Bishop asked Greene to think of a name and the first that came to Greene was that of a guest whose signature he had noticed on the club register earlier in the evening.

Blindfolded, Bishop led Greene directly to the register, ran a finger down the page and stopped at the signature of the man of whom Greene had thought. Several moments later Bishop apparently fainted. Physicians in the audience examined him, pronounced it catalepsy and restored the mind reader. Some in the club

were skeptical and were at no pains to conceal their suspicions of a hoax. Piqued by these doubts, Bishop began another demonstration. In the midst of it he fell in a second faint. Unable to revive him, the doctors present had him carried to a room in the clubhouse, where he died the following noon.

The attending physicians called in consultants and eventually the coroner, and an autopsy was performed. Several days later Bishop's mother brought a criminal action against the doctors who had taken part in the autopsy, charging that her son was not dead but in a state of suspended animation common to him. He always had carried a written warning on his person, she said, addressed to "doctors and friends", forbidding an autopsy or any violent means of resuscitation. No such paper had been found on him, however, and a coroner's jury absolved the officiating surgeons from all blame.

Eventually these Gambols were the salvation of the club and created its lasting prosperity. Originally they had been private affairs to which each Lamb was entitled to bring one guest. In 1891 Augustus Thomas suggested that the best of the acts be grouped into a public Gambol to which admission would be charged, a varia-

tion of the time-honored benefit performance. It was done and Robert G. Ingersoll, who had become a member in 1889, made the opening address. The receipts and the business sense of Greene as Shepherd and Thomas as Boy began to pull the club out of debt. They compromised with our creditors and the membership began to leap. In 1895 it was 272 and when Greene and Thomas stepped down in 1899, after seven years in office, the club had a waiting list for the first time.

Furthermore, it occupied a home of its own. Thomas B. Clarke, the art connoisseur, first suggested that the club buy and build. In 1896 a house at Number 70 West Thirty-sixth Street was purchased with money produced by the public Gambols, remodelled on plans of Stanford White, and occupied in May, 1897. It became a famous chophouse when we crossed Forty-Second street in pursuit of the still shifting theatrical district, but in 1897 Herald Square was the Rialto's heart, just as Twenty-third Street had been when we were in Twenty-sixth Street.

Again it was Thomas who pointed the way to the present club building. The carpets hardly were down in Thirty-sixth Street when he

broached the plan of an annual All Star Gambol Tour of the larger cities. Nat Goodwin was the first to volunteer, and William H. Crane, Stuart Robson, Wilton Lackaye, Henry M. Woodruff, Clay Greene, T. Daniel Frawley, E. W. Kemble, Joseph Holland, Fritz Williams, Vincent Serrano, Charles Klein, Burr McIntosh, Chauncey Olcott, George Barnum, E. J. Kellard, Jefferson de Angelis, Alfred Klein, Digby Bell and myself were among the members who followed his lead. We opened at the Metropolitan Opera House, May 24, 1898, in the midst of the Spanish-American War to a gala audience, and set out by special train with Boston our first stop. There was a minstrel first part, with myself as interlocutor, and in every city we paraded minstrel fashion in frock coats and high hats, headed by a band of fifty led by the late Victor Herbert.

The net proceeds of the week's tour was sixty-two thousand dollars, sufficient to pay off both mortgages on the new club, all other debts and leave a little in the treasury. The tour became an annual event and accumulated a surplus so rapidly that we bought the site, built our present home and occupied it in 1905. Ten years later we doubled the building.

Rising transportation costs, the increasing disinclination of actors to leave New York, and the dwindling novelty of the tour, put an end to them before the War, but the annual public Gambol continues to be given in New York. Its proceeds and the income from the dormitories, the restaurant, and the moderate dues from the sixteen hundred members, what with a rent and mortgage-free property, suffice to keep the club self-sustaining.

The public Gambol is held in the largest theater obtainable, usually the Metropolitan, the Century or the Hippodrome, but the more frequent private Gambols take place in the theater in the club building, the most completely equipped little theater I know of. Members still are entitled to bring one guest each, but to discourage the practice because of the limited capacity of the theater, ten dollars is charged for each non-member attending.

I hope the reader has not formed a mental picture of a Gambol as a sort of Mulligan stew to which members contribute bits from their repertoire. It is not, neither is it actors' horseplay, nor even excerpts from current plays nor burlesques upon them, nor a tryout for new plays and vaudeville acts. The boys do not

gather in the grill and say, "Let's get up a show a week from Tuesday night. Will Rogers can do his rope stuff; Dave Warfield might recite 'Good-by, Jim, Take Keer of Yerself'; Robert Mantell can do something from Shakespeare; Raymond Hitchcock imitate Elsie Janis imitating Eddie Foy; Giovanni Martinelli sing all six parts of the 'Lucia' sextette"; and Hopper recite 'Casey.'

That program, deleted of my "Casey", might do for a benefit, but it would be a cab-driver's vacation for The Lambs. Long ago the club demanded the new and the unusual in its theater and enforced the demand. The Collie and the members he drafts for the program are on their mettle, and as the membership includes famous artists, musicians, dramatists, novelists, cartoonists and the like, as well as the run of the stage, there is no lack of material. The programs run the gamut from farce and burlesque to tragedy.

More than one young man has won his first hearing on Broadway through his contributions to a Gambol. Hazzard Short is an example. Three famous plays grew out of sketches witten for our shows — Edward Milton Royle's "The Squaw Man", Augustus Thomas' "The Witch-

ing Hour" and "The Copperhead". That uproarious skit, "The Lady in Red", made famous by Clark and McCullough, and pretending to be the opening performance of an English melodrama by a stock company in Winniepasooga, Wisconsin, was part of one Gambol, Walter Catlett playing Mahomet Mahoney, the eminent detective with his "Damned clever, these Chinese!" If there ever has been anything funnier, it was the sketch entitled "At the Grand Guignol" — in which Frank McCormack, as the guide-interpreter, sat in a stage box and explained in broken and ecstatic English the story of a typical Guignol comedy to two male American tourists — which has twice been on a Gambol program, the only act, I believe, that ever was repeated and that by vociferous demand. Both of these skits, while convulsive to any audience, were peculiarly hilarious to actors, but the latter was too broad in its situations for the commercial stage. Other sketches that have made particular Gambols memorable never have passed beyond the club stage because they were too professional in their appeal or otherwise unsuited for box-office patronage.

Because women never are admitted to the club — there never has been a Ladies' Day —

all feminine parts must be played by men. This is simple enough in farce and comedy; it often adds to the risibilities, as many a college dramatic club has demonstrated, but in serious drama there is no more severe test of an actor's ability. He begins with the enormous handicap of his audience's knowledge that he is a man masquerading as a woman, a basically ludicrous situation. Yet again and again on Gambol nights I have seen women's rôles in drama and tragedy played by men so extraordinarily well that I could think of few actresses who might have done the parts better.

The most memorable of all, it seems to me, was Ed S. Abeles' playing of the squaw in the sketch that became "The Squaw Man." The story was that of an English younger son who had settled on a Wyoming ranch in the eighties, and with no thought ever of returning home, had become a father of a half-breed son. When the child is some six years old a barrister arrives from England with word that the squaw man's father and elder brothers all are dead and that he has come into the title and the estate. The squaw man, sincerely devoted to the mother of his child, rejects both title and estate, but the lawyer pleads *noblesse oblige*. The squaw man

must, he argues, be true to his blood and return to his own; the Indian mother must be bought off, and the child reared commensurately with his station in life. The invoking of the boy's future wins the father reluctantly to the lawyer's plea, and he breaks the decision to the squaw as kindly as possible.

A stolid savage, knowing only a dozen words of English, and her native speech unintelligible to the man, she cannot convey her grief, despair and ravished mother love by impassioned rhetoric or gestures. Whoever plays the part is restricted to little more than grunts. The squaw grasps the situation slowly, consents with a nod, almost as if it were a commonplace for a woman to surrender her child and mate to an abstraction of which she understands nothing, and leaves the stage. She is not seen again, but a moment later the single bark of a pistol tells her fate. As the play is written, the whole burden of this climactic scene is left to the skill of the actress, and more than one, when the play became a popular success, was found unequal to it. But long before the renunciation scene this night, all had forgotten that Abeles was not really an Indian mother, and I rarely have seen a more spontaneous or a more emotional

response, even in the Lambs Theater where, with sympathetic and play-wise audiences, good work always is handsomely rewarded.

Another performance that sticks in my memory was that of Byron Ongley's "The Model" in the Gambol of April 10, 1910. The action took place in the Paris studio of a young English artist. The young man's mother visits him in an effort to dissuade him from his Latin Quarter life. He smiles at her solicitude and sends her away affectionately. I do not remember the name of the young actor who played the gray-haired mother, but he gave a performance of which Mrs. Thomas Whiffen need not have been ashamed. The artist is painting a Biblical scene, and unable to find among the professional models a face that suggests the spiritual demands of the Christ, he sends his servant out to scour the streets. The servant is long on the quest, but returns at last with a splendid young peasant with a natural blond beard. The artist instructs the servant to show the peasant into another room and make him up for the subject. Meanwhile a half-drunken crowd of fellow artists, students and models have gathered in the studio. The party verges on an orgy and an old libertine, approaching senility, shakes his head

at the scene. He offers himself as a horrible example of a misspent life, but Youth flouts his moralizing.

In the midst of the orgy the model, garbed for his rôle, appears without warning on the platform. A woman sees him first and faints without a sound. Another woman espies him, her wine glass shatters on the floor and she screams hysterically. An awesome hush follows, every eye turned toward the figure on the platform, and the old roué, standing aghast for a moment, drops to the floor, dead.

When I was Shepherd, the great French actor Coquelin was the guest of the club at a Gambol. The program included a little drama of two characters played by W. H. Thompson and Henry Dixey. They were two old men, companions in young manhood, who had drifted apart in life and tastes, but who continued annually to meet on the birthday of one. Each had a single son. Thompson had reared his boy with a rod of iron. Dixey had been an indulgent parent. Repeatedly Thompson had prophesied disaster for his friend's leniency, and in fulfillment of the prediction, word comes in the midst of the annual reunion that Dixey's son is under arrest. But it is discovered shortly

that Thompson's son has committed forgery and that the other boy has shielded him from disgrace by shouldering the crime himself. The dismay, grief and mortification of the stern father was splendidly done by Thompson. Coquelin, sitting beside me, seized my hand and crushed it unconsciously as he watched. "*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!*" he exclaimed. "Such acting can spring only from sentiment surely, from love of your club. Money could not buy it."

In another vein we once played the French pantomime, "Three Words." Eddie Tyler was the young woman, E. M. Holland the husband, and I the other man. I was discovered making violent pantomimic love to Tyler in a dimly lighted apartment. It was a highly farcical scene suddenly interrupted by the appearance of Holland in the door. He had the difficult task of swinging the audience from extreme mirth to aroused apprehension without speaking a word. The house stilled instantly. Taking in the situation at one glance, Holland drew a revolver and fired twice. Tyler and I died where we fell and Holland calmly restored the revolver to his pocket. The audience still hushed by the tragedy, Holland turned up the lights, started suddenly, peered into Tyler's

face, drew back with a gasp and exclaimed the only three words of the play "The wrong flat!"

In the humane régime of Warden Osborne at Sing Sing, eighty of us once went to Ossining and gave two performances of current Gambol material. Every man in the prison except those in the Death House and the hospital attended, in two bodies of eight hundred each. What I saw there left an abiding impression on me, and a conviction that it is better to err on the side of humanity rather than brutality in enforcing society's penalties on the criminal.

As I looked through the peephole in the curtain of the prison stage my eye was caught by one face in particular in that strange audience. It was a Brutus-like face, the seeming epitome of honor, and I marked the man well and struck up a brief acquaintance when the first performance ended and the audience filed out to make way for the second section.

"I hope you liked it," I said to the prisoner.

"It was splendid," he said. "Broadway couldn't see that show, I imagine; no manager could pay that salary list."

"I wish you would tell me what act most appealed to you," I asked. "Your reaction would be helpful in pointing the second show."

"It's hard to choose from such a bill," was his answer, "but I guess the number that grabbed me most was Eddie Foy and his kids."

"Fond of children?" I suggested.

"Yes, by God!" he choked, and added that he had three of his own. He spoke as if he had no hope of seeing them again.

"But aren't all the old restrictions removed? You can see your children here, can't you?" I asked.

"They don't know where I am," he told me. "Probably they think me dead. It's better so."

Another prisoner I fell into conversation with proved to be a youthful Italian gunman, twenty-five or twenty-six, who had been born in Italy and spoke English with a mixture of Neapolitan accent and New York East Side argot which I shall not attempt to reproduce. His job, I discovered, was the incongruous one of superintendent of knitting. It was during the War and Sing Sing was competing with the mothers and sisters of the country in knitting mufflers, socks, sweaters and helmets for the troops. My gunman was as handy with knitting needles as with an automatic or a stiletto, it appeared. He told me of going with two other convicts to Auburn, the other New York State penitentiary,

to teach knitting there. It seemed to me that the three had gone and returned as free men, unaccompanied by guards, but I thought I had misunderstood.

I had understood correctly, however. "We couldn't run out on the Warden," he explained. "We're convinced that we have some honor left after the way he treats us. We used to slink around with our tails between our legs, but he lets us hold up our heads and look you in the eye." All this in a dialect which Leo Carillo or "Woppo" Marx might approximate, but which I shall spare you.

It seemed, however, that there was a man within the walls who had not been so sensitive to honor's call. He had escaped during a baseball game played at the prison between the Welfare League team, all convicts, and the Tarrytown Stars. "But we got him back, all right, all right!" the young Italian assured me, and I thought I sensed something ominous in the emphasis he gave his "all right, all right!"

Later I asked Warden Osborne what that emphasis implied. The runaway had fled straight for New York and hidden in one of the Italian quarters, the Warden explained. There the sweetheart of my gunman friend saw him

and wrote at once to her man, tipping off the fugitive's hiding place. The gunman went to the Warden and told him that he would guarantee to deliver the runaway at Sing Sing within twenty-four hours if permitted to go after him, accompanied by two fellow prisoners. The three departed from the prison on their honor one morning and were back with the cowed fugitive before dark.

Under Osborne's régime all such offenders were tried before the Welfare Committee, made up of convicts elected to office by the entire convict body. Only if the committee failed of a verdict did a case go to the Warden. Several members of the committee had been lawyers, and such trials were conducted with all the circumspection of a court of record, but with a refreshing absence of technicality.

The verdict in this instance was that the man who had run away should have a broad stripe of vividly yellow cloth sewed to his uniform diagonally from the left shoulder down to the bottom of the right trouser leg, and that he should be "sent to Coventry." That is, for the period of his punishment, no one, guard, prisoner, Warden or other should speak a word to him or notice his existence, beyond providing

him with food, water and his daily tasks. Before a week was up the man was begging him for mercy, the Warden added, but he declined to intervene.

The spirit of the place so impressed one of us that he asked a prisoner how much longer he had to serve. Six months, the convict told him.

"You'll almost be sorry to leave, won't you?" the actor suggested. "There are a lot of folks outside who aren't as pleasantly situated as you."

"You don't mean that, Mister!" the prisoner protested. "Things are a lot different here from what they used to be, but take away a man's liberty and you don't leave much. Give a blind man Rockefeller's money and he'll give it back to you in a flash for his eyesight. Don't worry about whether we're being punished or not. We are!"

We stayed over for another baseball game in the prison yard between the Welfare League team and the Tarrytown Stars. It was good Class B. baseball, Tarrytown winning, five to three. As Warden Osborne crossed the field before the start of the game, the convicts rose in mass with a spontaneous yell that voiced more affection than I supposed a yell could contain.

The Tarrytown shortstop distinguished himself both in the field and at bat. He had made his third hit, had stolen second, then third, when a voice came from the bleachers.

"Say!" it implored. "Go steal a watch somewhere, can't you? We need you on our side."

Our journey up the river had been marked with a good deal of that playful ribaldry that usually goes with an excursion of eighty males away from their daily environment, but homeward bound we were a quiet, thoughtful party. We had entertained sixteen hundred convicts and they had repaid us well.

On Sunday, May 23, 1926, The Lambs journeyed further up the river to another institution of rigorous discipline, West Point, and broke two traditions, one for West Point and one for The Lambs.

Brigadier General Merch B. Stewart, Superintendent of the Military Academy, is a Lamb, and we were his guests. Some three hundred Lambs with friends and families made the trip by special train. It is no ordinary feat in railroading to lose half an hour between Hoboken and West Point, but the West Shore achieved it, leading Julius Tannen to recite a

dream he had had of all the railroads in the country being blown up. All came down again except the West Shore, which was two hours late.

We dined with the Cadet Corps in the mess hall, listened to an organ recital by Frederick C. Mayer, for fifteen years organist in the lovely Gothic chapel that looks down on the Hudson; heard the cadet choir sing "The Corps" and "Alma Mater", an honor usually reserved for high ranking officers or officials of state; looked on at formal guard mount and evening parade, and were shown through the plant.

Then, to our surprise, we discovered that the show was not to be given by the army alone. A stage had been built over the home plate in the huge athletic stadium at the top of the hill, overlooking the chapel, and we were called upon to do our stuff. Like the village soprano, we had not brought our music, and were coy and fluttering. Tannen had been dragooned as master of ceremonies and he fixed a fishy eye upon me. Aware of the high morale and inflexible discipline of the Corps even under the most trying circumstances, I had no hesitancy in inflicting an extemporaneous monologue upon them. They never wavered, but came on yell-

ing grimly for "Casey", so the mighty Casey struck out on the West Point stadium field.

Mr. Tannen next seized upon Nate Leipsig, who borrowed a deck of cards with difficulty and made the cards do things. In spite of Nate, Mr. Tannen assured the eleven hundred cadets and two hundred officers that they might safely play cards at The Lambs; but as for the Army and Navy Club, — well, once he had played poker there and an officer held four aces. Tannen had not been watching that officer, having been watching another officer; so he asked this favored son of fortune if he had held those four aces before the draw. The officer and gentleman replied, "Sure, two hours."

Miss Fritzi Scheff having been detected by the admiring Cadets, not to say officers, among our party, the call for her became insistent and she took the stage to sing Irving Berlin's "Always" and her own song, "Kiss Me Again", from the late Victor Herbert's "Mlle. Modiste."

Miss Scheff is the first ewe Lamb, for never before had an actress taken part in the hitherto inexorably stag entertainments of the club. Likewise, it was the first time in the history of an institution much older than The Lambs that

a party of non-military visitors had messed with the Cadets like so many classmen, and the first occasion on which visitors had given an entertainment on the Academy grounds.

The Lambs exchanged courtesies with two other clubs, the Savage of London and the Bohemian of San Francisco. The handsome building of the latter was one of the casualties of the earthquake and fire of April, 1906. That year the Lambs donated the entire proceeds of their annual public Gambol to the Bohemians. The club at the Golden Gate did not need the money, it developed, but instead of returning it with a note of appreciation, they did a more graceful thing. The sum was devoted to a handsome private dining hall, into the woodwork, furniture and lighting fixtures of which the insignia of The Lambs was worked, and the hall christened The Lambs Room.

Ask a Lamb his address and he will not give you the street number of his home nor the name of the theater where he is playing. He will answer as Wilton Lackaye once did. Much against his will, Mr. Lackaye had been shanghaied to deliver the baccalaureate sermon to some amateur or Little Theater group affair. He attended with poor grace, I fear, and found

himself compelled to listen for three quarters of an hour to an introduction compounded of wind and fumbling flattery. When the chairman eventually reached, "The brilliant speaker of the evening now will give you his address", Mr. Lackaye arose, advanced to the front of the rostrum, and said, "My address is The Lambs Club." Whereupon he sat down.

Many a post-office, the appointment for which has prematurely grayed the hair of a congressman, handles less mail than is distributed at The Lambs. There is an array of lock boxes such as that of a small-town post-office lobby, the boxes often shared by two or more members, and a general delivery desk. The job keeps a postmaster and a young woman assistant busy eight hours a day, and is unique in its way, except for those remarkable post-offices maintained by the *Billboard* in Cincinnati, Chicago, New York, Kansas City and San Francisco for the convenience of the roving players of the out-of-doors show world.

In the club lobby stands a large board like a punched-out candy lottery with a hole and a peg for each of the sixteen hundred members. When a member enters the club he inserts a peg in the hole allotted to him, and he withdraws

the peg when he leaves the building. The doormen are enabled thereby to say instantly who is and who is not in the building. This simple scheme saves a vast amount of confusion and effort, for the flow of messages, business and social, that pour in by telephone, telegraph and note is that of a great office building, and the members go and come as from a Subway station. Situated as it is within six blocks of four fifths of the Broadway theaters, Lambs use the club for any idle moment of their business as well as for their leisure. Members even pop in and out in make-up during off-stage waits in the theater. Often an actor appears in the first act and does not reappear until the last. As likely as not he will play his scene, wash the more obtrusive make-up from his face, run into The Lambs for half an hour or so, return to the theater at 10:15 to make his second appearance, then change into street clothes and go back to the club to eat his supper in the grill and spend the rest of his evening there.

Originally, the secretary was a member of the club, but it long ago became necessary to employ a man trained in business to give his entire time to the job. T. H. Druitt, the present secretary, came from the National City Bank

nine years ago. He and his staff have the management not only of a club but a fair-sized hotel, for there are fifty-four bedrooms on the upper floors, some occupied transiently, others permanently, and every room haunted by the ghost of one or more plays written therein. Each of the rooms originally was furnished by some one member. In token of this the rooms were named for the donors and carry brass name plates on the doors. As at The Players, any male more than twenty-one in any way connected with artistic life, even as a patron, is eligible, professional critics and dramatic agents only excepted. In practice this leaves the membership open to virtually any man of voting age who wishes to join, and whom the members wish to have, within the limits of sixteen hundred. The barring of critics and booking agents was a wise provision intended to avoid a source of potential friction in one case and to prevent the club from being used as a jobbing office in the other. The club has no quarrel whatever with either.

Unlike The Players, half or slightly more of the sixteen hundred are active in the theater. The nonprofessional half includes as wide a variety of occupation as a Rotary Club. For

no particular reason that I know of, the Navy and merchant shipping always have been largely represented in the club in my time. Wall Street has a bloc of members, too, but the bulk of the nonprofessionals are members of closely allied activities; cartoonists, composers, artists, illustrators, writers and the like.

A number of managers and producers are members; others, some of whose names have been proposed, are not. The Lambs have their own standards of congeniality. We have, also, our own estimate of abilities. I have heard the club buzz with praise for a finely done bit, unnoticed by the public, and the circus stunt of a great name coolly ignored. The democracy of the place is complete and unfeigned. We actors are not the most self-effacing of mankind, but we put aside most of our airs in our club. The motto of The Lambs is *Floreant Agni*, which, translated from the Sanscrit, means "You may be all the world to your public, but you're only an actor to us." This matter-of-factness seldom is resented, though an occasional old member who has left the stage for triumphs in Hollywood, has found it irritating and been seen less and less about the club when in New York. One old member who has left the stage for tri-

umphs in Hollywood and finds our democracy refreshing is Thomas Meighan. He is the present Shepherd.

As it should be in any club worthy of the name, conversation is the place's principal attraction; gossip, news of the trade and communion of like interests. When that palls, there are billiard tables, there is the ghost of a once-famous bar, and there are card tables. The last usually are busy, but not with the game that suggests itself whenever five or more American males are gathered together. Poker has been forbidden strictly for years, since it all but destroyed one theatrical club in New York. Bridge and auction pinochle take its place, and mah jongg still flourishes there, if nowhere else. The card tables occupy most of the space once given to the dining room. In the wartime crusade to save food and man power the upstairs dining room was abandoned and never restored. The less formal rathskellerlike grill in the basement was discovered to answer all needs.

And there is the library! The old one about the clubman who dropped dead in the club library and whose body was not stumbled upon until three weeks later was told originally, I suspect, of The Lambs.

There are a number of possible vocational explanations why actors rarely are encountered in chimney corners engrossed in a book. I pass by the reasons and recite the fact that they are not. An actor reading a book either wrote the book or he is looking to see if his name is mentioned in it. We read the trade papers, the newspapers and occasionally the magazines, because there the chance of finding our names is a sporting one, but having learned early in life that we might read a year in a library without once coming across the name of, for example, De Wolf Hopper, we are not exactly bookish.

The trade papers, newspapers and magazines are kept in the main lounge room of the club, where they are rustled occasionally by a member with nothing better to do. When in the course of casting a reportorial eye over the club for the purposes of this article, I asked to be directed to the library, I was sent to the newspaper rack.

"No," I protested, "there is a library here somewhere, a library with books in it. I know I have noticed it several times."

An old member corroborated me, but the secretary could not be found. When he returned from lunch he admitted that there was a library and asked me why I wished to go there.

I explained that I was writing an article for *The Saturday Evening Post.* Under the circumstances he thought there could be no objection, and led the way. The library was found to occupy handsome quarters on the street front of the third floor, the ceiling and walls done in panelled oak, and the latter ranged with glass-enclosed bookcases, a large refectory table in the center of the room, and in one corner a piano. A man was playing the piano and two other men stood beside him. All this was visible through the glass doors, but the doors were locked.

The secretary rapped and the man standing nearest the door stuck his head out and demanded, "What do you want?" We said that we should like to enter.

"They want to come in, Harmony," the man at the door addressed the pianist. "Is it all right?"

"They want to come in?" Harmony enquired.

"We wish to look at the books," I explained.

"Oh, they want to look at the books, Harmony," the man at the door relayed.

"Oh, books! Sure, let 'em in," said Harmony.

"He is running over the songs of his new show

for us," the man at the door explained, "and we didn't know who you were. You can't be too careful these days. It's getting so a man can't think his music out loud without running a chance of finding 'em singing it at the Palace the day after to-morrow."

The safest place in New York from prying ears, it appeared, was The Lambs library. The private showing of the score and lyrics of the nascent musical show continued. I and my eccentric interest in the books on the shelves were ignored politely. The library proved to cover a literary range I was not prepared for. Choosing a case at random, I drew forth a volume that turned out to be "The Yankee Girls in Zulu Land" by Louise Viscellus Sheldon. Stamped upon the flyleaf was the legend, "Sunday School Library of the Second Congregational Church of Haddonfield." At some time or the other I fear that Marcus Loew, who is notoriously careless about books, has borrowed "The Yankee Girls" and forgotten to send them back. By this time the fines must have exceeded the cost of the volume. Some of the other possibilities for a rainy Sunday afternoon I noted on the shelves were: "The Microscope and its Revelations," "Harris' In-

sects Injurious to Vegetation"; "Report of the University Club of Philadelphia for 1911", and three shelves of other club annuals; Bulletin 61 of the Bureau of American Ethnology, on Sioux Music; "On Sledge and Horseback to the Outcast Siberian Lepers", by Kate Marsden; Patent Office Report for 1887; The collected works of Hugh Miller; Report of the Medical Division of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut for 1910.

Something for every taste! The only hiatus I discovered were the Elsie books. I must, when this arduous task is completed, rearrange my time to make better use of the club library. But there is this to be said for it; the directors hold all their meetings in its cloisterlike seclusion.

If we do not read it may be because we have learned that the conversation in the club is better than any printed literature. We always have numbered amongst us many of the best wits of their times. In the old days in Twenty-sixth Street when I joined, Maurice Barrymore, father of Ethel, Lionel and Jack, was the quickest mind in the club. Barrymore's real name was Maurice Herbert Blythe. When he first came from England the managers objected to

his pronounced English accent and he could find no work. At length he returned to London to be greeted on all hands with, "My dear Barry, where in heaven's name did you acquire that vile American twang?"

On the seventh repetition of this query, Barrymore exclaimed, "I'll end up doing recitations on a transatlantic steamer."

He once was leading man for Mme. Bernard Beere, an English actress who was playing repertoire at Hammerstein's Opera House in Thirty-fourth Street. Like other of Hammerstein's Napoleonic conceptions, the house was a great barn, much too large for the drama. Business was poor, to the malicious delight of Wilton Lackaye, the bitterest Anglophobe in the club. Lackaye lay in wait for Barrymore at The Lambs to twit him of the failure of the visitor from perfidious Albion.

"Yes, I know," said Barrymore, "but the delicacy, the finesse of Madame's art is lost in that huge barn. It is a house that was built for broader effects."

Whereupon Lackaye suggested that some of the situations in Madame's repertoire were quite broad enough for any stage.

"True, true," agreed Maurice, "but there is a

theater where one can be obscene but not heard."

Joseph Jefferson had an amiable weakness for painting and once presented The Lambs with a leafy landscape entitled "Summer", of his own handiwork. I do not know what became of it, but at the time the work of art hung in the hallway in Twenty-sixth Street, Barrymore overheard a group of members bemoaning the long and idle summers and the short winters of the professional season.

"Why not save your money in winter and live like gentlemen in summer?" he interrupted. "You know," he added, pointing to Jefferson's landscape, "summer is not half as bad as it is painted."

The one man behind the bar at night at Twenty-sixth Street used to have his hands full along about eleven-thirty. One such night an impatient member who had laboriously worked his way from the third tier to the rail, all the while demanding a horse's neck, eventually got the harassed bartender's attention.

"Now, what is your order, sir?" the barkeep asked.

With heavy sarcasm the member replied, "I did want a horse's neck, but I suppose I shall

have to content myself with a piece of the hoof now."

"My dear fellow," interjected "Barry", who was alongside, "this is no one-horse club."

No member is safe from The Lambs' robust sense of humor. I recall a broad practical joke that had John Drew as its victim, and no member is more loved and respected. First acquainting every one in the grill but Drew of his purpose, George Nash, whom the reader will remember as Charley Young in "East is West", disappeared into an outgoing telephone booth one sweltering summer evening, called the club back and asked for Mr. Drew. Drew, being paged, entered an incoming booth at the opposite end of the grill, while all those privy to the joke gathered around Nash. Assuming a credible feminine voice, Nash asked in honeyed tones:

"Is this Mister Drew, Mister John Drew?"

Drew admitted the soft impeachment.

"Do you recognize my voice?" twittered Nash.

Mr. Drew did not, but he implied interest.

"Wait just a moment and I'll bring some one to the 'phone whose voice you will recognize," the false soprano promised.

Never guilty of a discourtesy, the immaculate Drew sat in the Turkish-bath temperature of the booth for twelve minutes, awaiting the other voice. He shifted the receiver from his right ear to his left and back to the right, he fidgeted and squirmed, and with his free hand mopped his streaming face. Meanwhile Nash and a growing audience fought to keep their mirth from penetrating the booth. Restoratives had to be applied when John finally slapped the receiver on to the hook and burst into the open again.

Drew was sitting in the club in 1906 reading a letter from his nephew, Jack Barrymore, reciting Jack's experiences in the San Francisco earthquake. He wrote that the first shock had precipitated him into a bathtub of water he had just drawn. Later, when attempting to cross to Oakland, he had been impressed by Funston's troops and put to work clearing the streets.

"It takes a convulsion of Nature to make my nephew take a bath and the United States army to put him to work," Drew sighed aloud.

Hugh Ford and Hap Ward collaborated in a more elaborate practical joke once that had for

its butt a well-known basso. The basso had been drinking heavily. Ward noticed him blinking owlishly in an easy chair in the club one night, and out of the clear blue, asked the basso, "What did you ever do to Hugh Ford, Charley?" The name was not Charley, but 'twill serve.

Charley blinked and muttered, "Never did anything; why?"

"Well, I think I never heard a man speak so unkindly of another as he did of you not half an hour ago," Ward said. "But for the love I bear Hugh Ford, I should have taken serious exception to his remarks."

Charley was indignant at once. He attempted to rise from his seat, but failing, sat there spluttering.

"This is a deplorable situation to have arisen in the club," Ward went on. "I think we should get at the bottom of it at once," and he helped Charley to his feet and led him over to Ford, who was talking with two fellow actors, all oblivious of Ward's impromptu joke.

"Mr. Ford," Ward interrupted, "you have said many brutal things of my friend Charles here. Now I demand either a retraction or substantiation."

Ford, catching on at once, replied cryptically, "I have my reasons."

Restraining the rising wrath of Charley, Ward persisted. "That, sir, is not sufficient!"

"Pardon me, sir," Ford returned with dignity, "but I should prefer not to enter into details. The subject is a painful and disagreeable one."

"That, sir, smacks of equivocation," retorted Ward. "On behalf of my friend, I demand indisputable proof of your reckless charges."

"Gentlemen," Ford turned to the others, "I decline to specify all the unpleasant details. In the street I might, but within these sacred portals, No! But I will go so far as to say that this man at this moment has stolen property on his person."

The basso bellowed with rage and had to be held back by main force.

"Wait, wait!" Hap ordered. "This absurd charge fortunately is simple of disproof. Will some of the gentlemen kindly search Charles?"

From the basso's pockets the committee produced club knives, forks, spoons, salt cellars, ash trays, napkins and everything except the club piano, all deposited there unbeknownst to the befuddled Charley during the course of the

argument. Charley sank back into the nearest chair and stared pop-eyed. He insisted on taking the pledge in the presence of witnesses, and went home convinced that he had appropriated the club's property while in an alcoholic stupor. He learned the truth shortly, but his chagrin had been so great that he never again was more than a casual patron of the bar.

Possibly Patrick Francis Murphy would be my nomination for first wit of the club to-day. Mr. Murphy is not an actor, but the American agent of a famous English leather goods house. A passionate lover of the theater and one of the best after-dinner speakers in America, he is a Lamb of the first magnitude. At a club banquet following a Gambol, a guest who was an amateur singer was asked to sing. He sang pretty badly and Wilton Lackaye was heard to remark in a none too *sotto voce*, "A tenor voice is a disease of the throat."

Mr. Lackaye's acid comment, unfortunately, reached the ears of the guest, and Mr. Murphy, rallying to the rescue, retorted even more audibly, "Don't forget, Wilton, that a pearl is a disease of the oyster."

Mr. Murphy is a Roman Catholic and the Ten Commandments have not the same order

in the Roman Bible as in the King James version. At another post-Gambol banquet, Patrick Francis told in his delightful way of some droll comment evoked from the immature mind of his seven-year-old daughter in reflection upon the sixth Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Rupert Hughes, the next speaker, remarked his surprise and chagrin that one of such brilliant attainments as the previous speaker, should be so little at home among the Commandments. When he went to Sunday-school, Mr. Hughes said, the Commandment in question was the seventh and had held that position for some four thousand years. Mr. Murphy retorted that he knew his decalogue thoroughly, and suggested that Mr. Hughes had been too long out of Sunday-school.

Augustus Thomas, who was presiding, intervened with his accustomed *savoir faire*. "I regret," said Mr. Thomas, "that so delicate a question as the numerical value of the Commandments delivered upon Sinai should have arisen in the club and led to controversy between two such gifted members, for after all, on questions of morality, all Lambs are at sixes and sevens."

The Lambs, of course, is the hotbed of Equity and was the keystone of the actors' strike of 1919. The thought of union and collective bargaining by a profession of rampant egoists and artists was laughable until that brief and sweeping strike turned out the lights of Broadway and kept them out until the managers agreed to end a number of ancient and cruel abuses of the theater. The sufferers from those abuses and the beneficiaries of the victory were the journeymen actors and actresses, not the Lambs, who are, for the most part, leading men and stars. It was such spectacles as the solidarity of the Lambs that heartened the generality of the profession to hold out until they had won. Frank Bacon, after a lifetime of obscurity in the theater, had reached Broadway with a phenomenal success. With his show sold out for weeks in advance, with nothing to gain and much to lose from the strike, he closed "Lightnin'" and threw all his weight into the cause. It was precisely the absence of this solidarity that defeated the earlier strike of the White Rats, the vaudeville actors' union. There the big names stood neutral on the side lines and watched the little fellows carry the ball.

It is a perversity of human nature that vicissitude sometimes takes on the rose tints of romance when seen from afar. Men of my generation are accustomed to sighing like young lovers at memories of their boyhood and how they broke the ice in the water pitcher on winter mornings as a necessary prelude to washing their faces. There still are many places where Aurora can be greeted in this virile fashion. Sighing New Yorkers need not even leave their city. Let them turn off the steam in their Park Avenue apartments the next bitter night, raise all the windows, buy a pitcher and bowl from an antique dealer, and leave it on the window sill. They prefer the memory.

Frank Gillmore, executive secretary and treasurer of Equity, tells of such a reaction from a veteran trouper who went out last year with a company that stranded miserably in a small Pennsylvania town. The manager had posted a mandatory bond with Equity to cover such a contingency, of course. Equity now paid all obligations, sent the company tickets to New York and met their back salaries when they arrived.

"There's no romance or adventure in the theater these days," the veteran trouper

grumbled, when he was back in Forty-fifth Street with a cheque in his pocket. "It used to be that we went to the hotel man and showed him that the only chance he had of collecting was to advance our fares to the next date and come with us and get his money out of the box-office receipts. If business was bad in the next town we repeated the process. I remember once when we had so many hotel men traveling with us that we organized them into a Landlords' Chorus that was a wow. It got so that we had to wire the advance man to pick out a hotel where the proprietor sang bass, we had so many tenors in the chorus. Those were the days!"

The Friars is a successful institution, younger than but similar in purpose and structure to The Lambs. George M. Cohan is the leading figure and the present Abbot, as its presiding officer is designated. They have a handsome club house in West Forty-eighth Street.

The oldest of all and the least known, even among the profession, is the Actors Order of Friendship, a secret order organized seventy-five years ago in Philadelphia when that city still was the capital of the American theater. Shakespeare Lodge Number 1 in Philadelphia

is out of active existence. Edwin Forrest Lodge Number 2, formed in New York twenty-five years later, by Booth, Jefferson, Barrett, W. J. Florence, William H. Crane, William A. Brady, Otis Skinner, John Drew, F. F. Mackay, Milton Nobles and others, now has only sixty-five members, but it owns property worth more than one hundred thousand dollars. In its early years members sold their costumes to raise money to bury their dead, but many years ago William Harris, Senior, Frank Sanger, Louis Aldrich, Joseph Grismer and William A. Brady began buying New York downtown real estate on time in their lodge's behalf. One of the last houses owned by the order was Number 166 West Forty-seventh, where the Palace Theater now stands. When the Palace was built, the lodge bought across the street at Number 139. With a large house on their hands and little use for it, the members made an effort to attract the younger generation and organized the Green Room Club as a social subsidiary occupying the lower floors. But the younger actors failing to be attracted in numbers, the club was separated entirely from the lodge, and the lower floors rented to the club. Eventually the property became so valuable that the Green Room

no longer could afford to pay the rental. The Actors Order of Friendship then leased out the entire property and rented rooms in the Columbia Theater building, where it meets periodically. Equity has so usurped the original purpose of the order that it now functions only as a fraternal insurance body, and it will die, presumably, with its present membership.

The Green Room Club moved to Number 19 West Forty-eighth Street, where it has remained since. It has absorbed a club organized by managers and producers eighteen years ago and which they failed to maintain, and now includes such figures as Mr. Belasco and Mr. Frohman among its members.

Before disaster overtook the White Rats, the vaudevillians had built a large and handsome club in Forty-sixth Street west of Broadway. Debt and the failure of the strike closed the club. E. F. Albee, overlord of vaudeville, saw his opportunity, bought the property and installed his National Vaudeville Association in it. The N. V. A. is a sort of "company union." It offers illness and death benefits, maintains a hospital in Chicago as well as a club in New York, and membership is enforced at ten dollars a year upon all of the eight thousand

variety players, but its destinies are controlled by Mr. Albee and his associates, not by the members.

Whether there is no similar need among the women of the theater, whether they lack the fraternal spirit, or what, the other sex have only one club, the "Twelfth Night", and that of no such scope as the Lambs or Players or Friars.

The Actors' Equity Association now is housed in a hundred thousand dollar building in West Forty-fifth Street and has accumulated a surplus of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars since the actors' strike; but Equity properly is not a club, but a union.

For thirty-seven years the profession has conducted the most efficient and one of the greatest charities I know of, the Actors' Fund of America. Any one in the theater, from scrub woman to star, may call upon it. With very small dues it has amassed assets of two million dollars. Donations, bequests and benefits account for its wealth. It gives away something like one hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year without conditions or red tape, and does it with an overhead of only fourteen per cent where normally much less than fifty cents

of every charity dollar reaches the persons intended. The credit for this unprecedentedly low cost of administration belongs with Daniel Frohman, who has given his time and money for years as a labor of love, and to Sam Scribner, Marc Klaw, Bĕrnard A. Reinard and Walter Vincent. Percy Williams, the vaudeville magnate, on his death bequeathed three million dollars to the fund. When the estate is liquidated and the money is available, part of it will be spent at once in enlarging the Actors' Home on Staten Island, where thirty-five veteran actors and actresses now are housed with every comfort for the balance of their lives.

I know of no other class or profession that gives a quarter as much to charity or gives it a quarter as cheerfully as do actors. Perhaps no other profession has such a tribal memory of a time when none of its professors was safe from the need of alms. This habit of generous giving made the actor useful to the government during the War. Every week, while the wounded of the A. E. F. came back from France, Gene Buck took a party of from fifty to three hundred and fifty convalescent soldiers to a matinée, then to The Lambs for a dinner, where

the celebrities of the stage waited on the tables and later gave a show.

In recognition of the money the members subscribed and induced the public to subscribe in the Liberty Bond campaigns, the Government paid us the honor of naming a 9700-ton Shipping Board freighter The Lambs, and the ship has done us proud. Out of that great war-built or acquired fleet of something like sixteen hundred merchant vessels, The Lambs is one of the few not tied up, junked or lost. It has steamed two hundred thousand miles since 1919 and is in a round-the-world service from New York to the Philippines and the Dutch East Indies to-day.

In the Red Cross drives the Lambs and the Friars united in parading New York as strolling minstrels. Fifth Avenue from Twenty-sixth to Forty-second streets was roped off for us. I was playing at the Hippodrome at the time and performed with the Hippodrome elephants.

"If I induce this lady to put her mouth down and kiss me, will you make it worth her while?" I used to ask the crowd, pointing to Roxy, one of the pachyderms. "Surely you can't expect her to kiss me for nothing." The force of this

argument was felt. Silver and bills showered into the street, and Roxy did her bit to win the War. At other times I would ask the crowd how much they would pay to see Lena, weight five tons, sit upon my prostrate form. Lena and I played to as high as $110 in this act. After six years of separation, I encountered the former Hippodrome elephants at Atlantic City last summer, and I think I never have been more flattered than by their instant and fond recognition. They were in the midst of their morning dip in the surf when they spied me, and they left no doubts in the minds of the bathers but that we were old friends.

The private charities of The Lambs and of actors in general are less spectacular but continuous. I have seen two to three thousand dollars raised quietly in the club in an afternoon for a family left destitute by the death of an unfortunate or improvident member. They give quite as freely of their time, their art and the milk of human kindness. Because it could have happened only of actors and illustrates the kindliness of our kind, I set down here a strange and dramatic story told me by Dodson Mitchell last summer when both of us were playing in Philadelphia.

Billy Judson had been a broker in Wall Street, a dog fancier, a first nighter and a Broadway character until paralysis laid him low. Although the paralysis was all but total, Judson continued to conduct his brokerage business from his bed in his bachelor rooms in West Forty-sixth Street, using a specially designed headgear telephone, and to keep open house there for his numerous friends. With that eager sympathy characteristic of the real Broadway, Judson's friends used to make it a point to stop in and brighten his day with the chatter of the stage, the paralytic listening wistfully to the talk of the life he had loved and now was denied him. Occasionally, when the weather was fine, a lawyer friend used to wheel him along the sidewalks of Forty-sixth Street in a hospital rolling bed, as the crowds were moving into the theaters, Judson's eyes lighting up with a pathetic blend of pleasure and pain.

Some one among his callers spoke to Judson one day of a Miss Gay MacLaren who had the remarkable gift of being able to reproduce a play line for line and character for character after watching it three or four times. "Within the Law" was the show of the moment. Judson was frantic to see it, and Miss MacLaren,

who had just returned from Panama where the Government had sent her to entertain the force that was digging the Canal, was reported to have added "Within the Law" to her repertoire. When the situation was explained to Miss MacLaren she offered at once to reënact the play at Judson's bedside.

Winchell Smith brought along Dodson Mitchell, who was playing the male lead in "Within the Law." Mitchell was skeptical of Miss MacLaren's or any one's ability to do more than memorize the lines, if that, and Judson, anxious to believe that she could do all that was claimed for her, bet the actor a box of cigars on the outcome. A stipulation of the bet was that Miss MacLaren was not to know Mitchell's true identity and that he should be introduced to her as Mr. Dodson.

She came and Mitchell lost the bet. Without scenery or costumes, without ever having seen the script of the play, and before that curious little audience, she gave the drama letter perfect and with amazing mimicry, the paralytic devouring it all with his glowing eyes.

"I had expected a memory stunt," Mr. Mitchell told me. "It was remarkable enough as that, but it also was an extraordinary piece of

acting. She was Jane Cowl and Florence Nash to the life. Her men were not such exact copies, of course, but they were amazingly good. I had no difficulty in recognizing myself. And when she had finished, she turned to me and asked, 'Well, Mr. Mitchell, how did you like it?' She had recognized me from the first."

Miss MacLaren's "Within the Law" was Judson's last night in the theater. He died during the winter and Broadway long since has forgotten him. She continues to earn an interesting and a unique livelihood as a one-woman theater. She is on the road six months of every season, giving her recreations before schools, clubs, Little Theaters, and as a part of the Artists and Lecture courses supported by every self-respecting American community. Unfortunately there is only one of her, or she might solve the great problem of the road.

Originally she set forth each season with two or three of the reigning New York successes; but last season, and here is a commentary on the present state of the drama, there was no play on Broadway fit for her use. The available successful plays either were too frank or too indecent for her audiences, the available clean

plays were dull. And Miss MacLaren was reduced to writing a play of her own and using Romeo and Juliet as the balance of her repertoire.

The post-war drama reminds me now and then of the hero of a ballad contributed to the program of the Golden Jubilee Gambol by Benjamin H. Burt, lyricist laureate of The Lambs. It runs, in part:

One evening in October,
When I was far from sober
And dragging home a "load" with manly pride;
My poor feet began to stutter,
So I lay down in the gutter,
And a pig came up and lay down by my side.
Then we warbled, "It's fair weather when good
fellows get together,"
'Till a lady passing by, was heard to say:
"You can tell a man who boozes by the playmates that he chooses,"
And the pig got up and slowly walked away.

CHORUS

Yes, the pig got up and slowly walked away!
Slowly walked away, slowly walked away,
Yes, the pig got up, and without a word to say,
He looked at me, and thought that he
Would leave me where I lay.

And the P–I–G a lesson taught to me;
And that was not to be, a bigger pig than he,
So I climbed next day, on the water cart to stay,
When the pig got up and slowly walked away.

One of these days even the pig is going to walk out.

END

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